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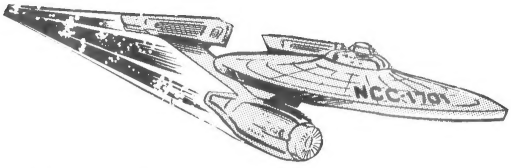

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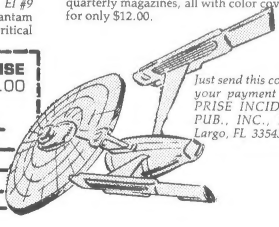

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COMICS FEATURE

JANUARY NUMBER 15

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Margaret O'Connell examines the appeal of the X-Men's late ***cause celebre.*** pg. 60

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TARZAN OF THE COMICS

A short appraisal of the Lord of the Jungle's career in comic books ***by Lou Mougin.*** pg. 50

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AN INTERVIEW WITH PAUL LEVITZ

Richard Howell and Carol Kalish question DC's Manager of Business Affairs about his past and upcoming work on ***THE LEGION OF SUPER-HEROES.*** pg. 15

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BEYOND THE MOVIE! BETWEEN THE MOVIES! STAR WARS COMICS UNDER ARCHIE GOODWIN

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Kurt Busiek oversees three years of Marvel's licensed space-fantasy comics series. pg. 37

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SUPER-TEAM SPIRIT

Murray R. Ward, our master of super-team-work, subjects ***THE LEGION OF SUPER-HEROES*** to his expert analysis. pg. 30

Cover by Chuck Patton

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OPENING NOTES

by Carol Kalish

Recently Richard Howell and I attended the justly famous San Diego Comics Convention. In addition to enjoying the convention programming and experiencing the pleasure of meeting hordes of people we had formerly only known through the aegis of the Bell Telephone system, we also spent vast amounts of time (and, alas, money) in the dealers' room.

After having rushed into the dealers' area, I enjoyed one of my favorite convention pastimes: overhearing the conversations, comments, and squeals of delight engendered by other would-be purchasers. While there was a lot said at the convention that I'm still thinking about, two remarks in particular sparked off some rather convoluted trains of thought.

The first remark came from a young fan who was standing in front of the lavishly-laden tables of Pacific Comics. The first issue of ***CAPTAIN VICTORY***, the first title of their new comics line had just been received from the printers and the young fan was audibly debating the wisdom in buying it. From his remarks one inferred that the fan was obviously impressed and interested in this latest comics offering, but the collector finally decided ***against*** purchasing an issue because, "It's not put out by Marvel or DC."

I was appalled. This attitude—that purchases should be dictated solely on the basis of whether or not it's published by a particular brand name company rather than whether the comic exhibits quality workmanship, special interest for the reader, or just sheer originality—is, to my mind at least, one of the most pernicious traps that any comics collector can fall into. I can recall (and I'm sure you can, too) numerous instances in which both Marvel and DC have published totally egregious comics that were ill-conceived and equally ill-executed. On the other hand, I have (and, again, I'm sure you have, too) been entranced by series that have been released by either smaller publishers or by publishers that no longer exist. The mind positively boggles at what the aforementioned uninformed comics collector has willfully cut himself off from ever experiencing: Atlas, Tower, Fawcett, Dell, Harvey, Prize, and a myriad of other extinct companies are forbidden territory for this reader.

What could cause any comics fan to so narrowly define his reading interests? Remember, we're not talking about a reader who samples a wide variety of different publishers' offerings and ***then*** decides that in his subjective view only the output of one or two publishers is worthy of his interest. No, we're talking about fans who are reluctant to experiment and who refuse categorically to buy any title not publish by the "Big Two" of comics, regardless of whether or not they have any knowledge or familiarity with the rejected books or their respective publishers. This question is a troubling one, and I, for one, would like to hear an intelligent answer to it. Lord knows, I can't think of one.

YOU'RE WRONG, CHIEF! I HAVE FOUND PEACE!
AHHHH! SO YOU'RE AMONG US AGAIN! AND WHAT FORM DOES THIS PEACE TAKE?
A HARMONY WITH ALL LIVING THINGS!
©1983 DC Comics

Robotman's guest appearance in the current *TEEN TITANS* storyline has revived interest in the adventures he shared with his fellow Doom Patrol members.

The second comment that I overheard at San Diego gave me far more pleasure than the first. I was working my way through several "junk comic" boxes wondering whether there were any ***BETTY AND VERONICA*** issues that I didn't already have or stray love comics or war comics waiting to be given a new home, when I overheard several young fans (all right, they looked young to ***me***—they must have been all of 12 to 13 years old) inquiring eagerly after back issues of ***MY GREATEST ADVENTURE*** and/or ***THE DOOM PATROL***. I was somewhat bemused by all this interest in a series that had been cancelled around the time these buyers had been born, and asked the buyers why they were so interested in the series. The answer I received was rather staggering. It seems that ever since Marv Wolfman decided to tie up various dangling plot threads from the old ***DOOM PATROL*** book in his new fan-hit ***THE TEEN TITANS***, there's been a revived interest in the defunct series, and back issues have been selling like hotcakes. Spot-checking other dealers tables in the room confirmed that this general upsurge in ***DOOM PATROL*** readers was a general phenomenon. What was even more encouraging was the observation of one dealer that young readers are more than willing to buy something new and different if they just have some encouragement to do so. It seems that the plugs for ***THE DOOM PATROL*** were all that was necessary to convince many new readers that they would like the book.

That started me thinking. Is all that is needed for interest to be revived in some title a little encouragement from those readers who ***are*** familiar with the series? If so, then publications like ***COMICS FEATURE***, which include numerous articles and overviews on defunct series and lost genres, might very well be all that's needed to tip off interested readers about series that they've had no contact with before or publishers that went out of business long before those readers could afford to buy comics. Comics clubs might provide the perfect means to find out what other readers' favorite series are so these new, potentially unfamiliar series can be sampled and possibly enjoyed. Finally, the comics conventions which are sprouting up throughout the country might be the perfect place to spend a few spare dollars in order to pick up a selection of "new" comics, series that they've just never tried before. Who knows, it might be that deep-down inside, totally unsuspected even by himself, there's an avid funny animal collector, or a western enthusiast, or a devotee of some particular artist's work waiting to be unleashed. Don't wait for Marv Wolfman to tell you about some other terrific series that you simply must read and enjoy; find out about those series yourself. You'll enjoy the thrill of discovery and experience the difficulty and enjoyment of the search.

peter pan

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HEADLINES

COMIC WORLD VERSUS COMICS WORLD

INJUNCTION SOUGHT AGAINST NEW COMICS MAGAZINE

O'Quinn Studios, publisher of ***STARLOG***, ***FANGORIA***, and other science fiction and fantasy-related media magazines, has encountered problems with their proposed ***COMICS WORLD***, a newsstand magazine about comics. Bob Jennings, publisher of ***COMIC WORLD***, has filed for an injunction against the printing, publication, and distribution of ***COMICS WORLD***, claiming that O'Quinn's title infringes on the title Jennings has published for nearly twenty years.

Jennings says that his only desire is to keep O'Quinn from using the title; he bears O'Quinn no ill will or malice, and probably will not seek damages against the company. Jennings has retained Richard H. Morrissey, also a noted fan writer, as his lawyer locally; he is being represented in New York by Marks and Clerk.

Norman Jacobs, co-publisher of ***STARLOG*** (with Kerry O'Quinn), said that O'Quinn Studios anticipates no problems with the injunction. "We checked with our lawyers—we're all legal and everything," stated Jacobs. At ***COMICS FEATURE***'s press time, no injunction had been served, according to Jacobs.

Jacobs feels that the magazines are not competitive, since their ***COMICS WORLD*** will go to a general newsstand audience, whereas Jennings' ***COMIC WORLD*** is a specialty magazine which is sold primarily through the mail. According to United States trademark law, infringement takes place if there is a likelihood of confusion between the similar names, which means that there must be an element of competition.

When Jennings found out about O'Quinn's plans for ***COMICS WORLD*** from a distributor, he sent two registered letters to the company, informing them of his magazine's similar title. Jennings said that O'Quinn's lawyers "tried to brush me off," suggesting that since he was a small publisher with limited circulation and an irregular schedule, he would be at a disadvantage.

Jennings said, "These lawyers don't seem to understand that someone is willing to defend himself." He continued, "My magazine has been in existence twenty years, and [the title]'s ***mine***, dammit!" Jennings indicated that if he were to be denied the injunction, he would appeal—"to the Supreme Court if I have to"—until his ownership of the title was recognized.

Jacobs stated, "All I could say is that we have copyrighted it." In the United States, however, one must trademark a name or title; the contents of a magazine can be copyrighted, but not the title. When ***COMICS FEATURE*** asked Jacobs if he meant that the title had been registered as a trademark, he replied, "We ***are*** registering it—but not as a trademark." He gave no further explanation.

O'Quinn Studios' ***COMICS WORLD*** is planned as a bi-monthly magazine, edited by ***STARLOG*** contributing editor Robert Greenberger. The magazine is planned to be 64 pages, 16 of which will have color, at a cover price of $2.50. According to ads in ***STARLOG***, ***COMICS WORLD*** will include interviews, articles on how comics are created and distributed, and a number of news and review columns, to cover overground, underground, and ground-level publishers, animation, movies and television, international comics, and fandom. The first issue was originally scheduled to be released in September, but was delayed until October.

COMIC WORLD, Jennings' magazine, concentrates on historical articles, with some industry analysis, plus some review and chat columns. Recent issues have included a long piece on the American Comics Group, a detailed description of how some distributors rip off the comics companies (with facts culled from Jennings' encounters with distributors while opening his comics shop), a history of romance comics, and a feature on Timely Comics' ***"Black Knight"*** feature. Although the most recent issue was dated Octobr, 1979, Jennings said that he has had an issue ready for release for some time, but personal finances delayed the publication. Jennings said that the new issue, #22, will be ready for release in mid-September.

This is not the first time O'Quinn has gone to court over a magazine title. In 1979, Blake Publishing Corp., publishers of ***FANTASTIC FILMS***, sought and was granted an injunction against O'Quinn Studios, who had planned a magazine called ***FANTASTICA***. In a seven-page decision, the New York Second District Court

con't. on next page

Jenning's magazine has been a fan staple for almost 20 years.

It features in-depth articles about Golden Age characters and series.

©1981 Bob Jennings

con't. from preceding page

ruled that although ***FANTASTIC FILMS*** was only a year-and-a-half old, it had sufficiently established itself and had built up a repeat readership of people who look specifically for ***FANTASTIC FILMS*** on the newsstand.

Among the points noted by the judge in the 1979 case which may be relevant to the ***COMICS WORLD*** case are that usage, not registration, determines protection; that a trademark's strength depends "on its distinctiveness... in [the] eyes of [the] reading public"; that the "second comer has [the] duty to so name and dress his product as to avoid all likelihood of consumers confusing it with product of [the] first comer"; that the "plaintiff [in the current case, Jennings] must demonstrate first, that its mark is entitled to trademark protection, and second, that defendants have used, or intend to use, a mark confusingly similar..."; that ***FANTASTIC FILMS*** was sold nationally and internationally, was considered successful by its distributor, and was promoted at both the wholesale and retail level; and that use of a "house name"—in the earlier case, the ***"STARLOG*** presents" cover line (which ***COMICS WORLD*** also has) does not necessarily prevent confusion. Since the cases are not exactly the same, and since two years have passed since the Blake v. O'Quinn case, it is hard to say which of these will or will not apply.

Contrary to what was printed on the cover, the last issue of ***COMICS FEATURE*** was not issue #15 but rather was #14. This issue is the one-and-only issue #15.

To avoid similar errors from occurring in the future, our entire production and proofreading staff has been instructed to learn how to count.

WONDER WOMAN CELEBRATES 40th ANNIVERSARY

Warner Communications and DC Comics have hired Karin Lippert, formerly of ***MS. MAGAZINE***, to co-ordinate the "Wonder Woman 40th Anniversary Celebration." Lippert's duties focus exclusively on the year-long celebration. Plans include a film festival, a television special, and a Wonder Woman awards dinner for 1982.

DC and Warner have also founded the Wonder Woman Foundation, to be headed by Koryne Horbel, former U.S. delegate to the United Nations on women. One of the Foundation's primary duties will be coordinating the presentation of the Wonder Woman awards, which DC press releases indicate will consist of "a Wonder Woman citation and actual financial grants... awarded to woman of 40 or over who have demonstrated both need and realizable promise."

Wonder Woman debuted in ***ALL STAR COMICS #8***, Winter 1941/42, in a special insert (not unlike DC's current method of introducing new features in similar inserts). She moved quickly into her own book, cover-dated Summer of 1942, and was also the lead feature in ***SENSATION COMICS*** for most of its run. She also had back-up series more recently in ***WORLD'S FINEST*** and ***ADVENTURE COMICS***.

The character was created by William Moulton Marston (writing under the name Charles Moulton), a psychiatrist who had noted that none of the comics his daughters were constantly reading featured prominant female role models. Wonder Woman was an immediate success, and was one of only three DC super-heroes who retained their title book despite the sales slump of the 1950s (Superman and Batman were DC's other two survivors). Since Marston's death, the character has been handled by a continuous procession of creators, including Mike Sekowsky, Bob Kanigher, Ross Andru, Denny O'Neil, Don Heck, Roy Thomas, and Gene Colan, among others.

From her very first appearance Wonder Woman was adopted as a symbol for those women who believed that there was more to life than just washing diapers and preparing dinner. Her debut came at a time when women were entering the labor force in droves as replacements for the men called into the armed services upon America's entry into World War II. She has acted as the unofficial symbol of the feminist cause ever since and has often been cited by feminist leaders as an early inspiration cum role model.

Because of her symbolic appeal and her popularity as a merchandising device, DC has continued to publish the ***WONDER WOMAN*** comic even though the series has suffered through repeated and drastic sales slumps.

MARVEL DEVELOPS NEW TITLES

Marvel Comics has announced that it intends to pick up its option to continue ***THE RAIDERS OF THE LOST ARK*** comics series. According to a Marvel spokesman, John Byrne has definitely been chosen to both write and pencil the new monthly book. It has not yet been confirmed whether ***RAIDERS OF THE LOST ARK*** will continue to be the title for the new comic.

When John Byrne was contacted about his involvement with the series, he remarked that he had not yet received final go-ahead on the project. However, he *has* worked up four different treatments of how he would handle the series to show Lucasfilms, Ltd., each sample exhibiting a different story element (science-fiction, occult, etc.) which could be integrated into the continuing adventures of the characters first developed in the popular movie. Byrne indicated that he expects close supervision over his interpretation of the movie's concepts and characters if the comics series does indeed continue as a Marvel comic book.

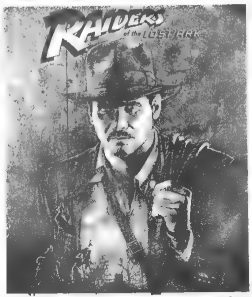
Terry Austin might be the regular inker on the series. He is definitely inking the sample pages.

Many details about the project still need to be worked out, however. Byrne still has not received official go-ahead on the series; no storylines have yet been approved by Lucasfilm, Ltd.; and the book itself is currently unscheduled as to its release date. Most of these details, though, should be settled within the next several weeks.

Marvel is also developing several other non-super-hero oriented comics. The company currently plans to release a one-shot ***G.I. JOE*** comic in conjunction with Hasbro, the toy's manufacturer, as well as ***TEAM AMERICA***, a monthly series based on concepts developed by Jim Shooter.

The ***G.I. JOE*** comic will be a comic book version of the adventures of the Hasbro toy, which Marvel has helped up-date and redesign to be more attractive to today's market. The current toy will be able to assume such adventuresome civilian identies as a fireman, S.W.A.T. team member, an explorer, *et al*.

Hasbro plans a national television advertising campaign which will promote both the toy and the comic.



Indiana Jones will soon appear as a regular Marvel character.

Currently the book's creative team includes Larry Hama (writer), Herb Trimpe (penciller), Bob McLeod (inker), and Tom DeFalco (editor). Archie Goodwin is acting as a special consultant on the project.

If the sales of this one-shot comic are strong enough, the ***G.I. JOE*** comic will in all probability become a regular Marvel title.

TEAM AMERICA, on the other hand, is already scheduled to be a regular monthly series. Plans call for the new book to premiere in Feburary of next year. Although no artist has yet been chosen for the series, Denny O'Neil will be the writer.

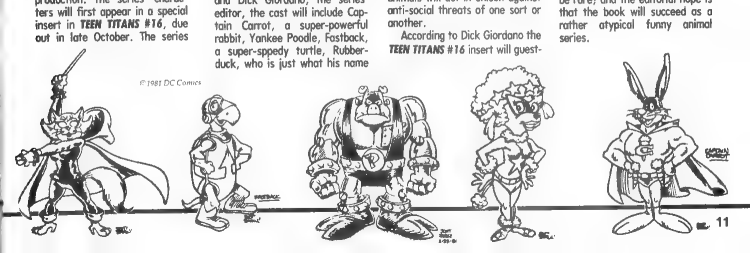
The series is based on concepts developed by Jim Shooter. Early reports are that the series will feature the adventures of a band of young motorcycle enthusiasts who are traveling through the United States.

ALL-ZOO CREW MEMBERSHIP ANNOUNCED

Roy Thomas' and Scott Shaw!'s new funny animal comic, ***CAPTAIN CARROT AND THE ALL-ZOO CREW***, has gone into active production. The series' characters will first appear in a special insert in ***TEEN TITANS #16***, due out in late October. The series will then move into its own monthly title, currently scheduled to appear in November.

According to DC press releases and Dick Giordano, the series' editor, the cast will include Captain Carrot, a super-powerful rabbit, Yankee Poodle, Fastback, a super-speedy turtle, Rubberduck, who is just what his name implies, Alleycat-Dabra, a magically endowed feline, and Pig-Iron, a rather metallic pig. These various super-powered animals will act in unison against anti-social threats of one sort or another.

According to Dick Giordano the ***TEEN TITANS #16*** insert will guest-star Superman. The series, however, is not set in the conventional DC universe. Human super-hero guest stars will be rare; and the editorial hope is that the book will succeed as a rather atypical funny animal series.



MARVEL

IRON MAN #155 will be Dan Green's first issue as the title's new regular inker.

STAR TREK is cancelled with issue #18.

When Marvel 32-page comics increase their cover price to 60¢ (from 50¢) in October of this year, the price of the 75¢ annuals and special issues will become $1.00. The 32-page comics will then contain 22 story pages, plus one ***"Bullpen Bulletins"*** page, and a guaranteed letters page, which will no longer be bumped for ads.

Marvel's renegotiated deal with the Robert E. Howard estate for the rights to the character Red Sonja is still not finalized. The rights to ***"Marada the She-Wolf,"*** the current configuration of the Chris Claremont/John Bolton ***"Red Sonja"*** version, have been turned over to Claremont and Bolton. ***"Marada"*** will be appearing, as an independent creation, in ***EPIC ILLUSTRATED*** magazine, beginning with issue #10.

©1981 Chris Claremont & John Bolton

The 1982 Marvel Annuals will be ***AVENGERS, CAPTAIN AMERICA, IRON MAN, MARVEL TWO-IN-ONE, THOR, HULK, ROM, AMAZING SPIDER-MAN, MARVEL TEAM-UP, CONAN, STAR WARS,*** and ***X-MEN.***

The double-sized special issues for 1982 will be ***DAREDEVIL #181*** (the conclusion of the current ***"Kingpin"*** story-line), ***DOCTOR STRANGE #55, DAZZLER #21, MASTER OF KUNG FU #118, X-MEN #165,*** and ***FANTASTIC FOUR #250.***

Jack Abel is becoming a full-time artist again, and will be under contract to Marvel. Al Milgrom has not yet chosen a new editorial assistant to replace Abel.

Bob Budiansky is also becoming a full-time artist, and may do at least some ***GHOST RIDER***s. Jim Salicrup's new assistant will probably be Lance Tooks.

SPIDEY SUPER STORIES has been cancelled. The last issue will be #57.

Steve Ditko has drawn ***MICRONAUTS #39.*** The inking will be done by Danny Bulanadi to ensure a consistent look to the series.

FANTASTIC FOUR #240 will take the foursome to the Land of the Inhumans, and reveal the fate of Medusa. It will also feature the birth of Crystal and Quicksilver's child.

The story originally scheduled for ***AMAZING SPIDER-MAN #224,*** which features the Molten Man, has been put into inventory and will probably be printed as a fill-in.

Shanna the She-Devil's wedding appears in ***KA-ZAR THE SAVAGE #13.*** The inker on that issue is Armando Gil.

There may be a new regular writer on ***THE GHOST RIDER.***

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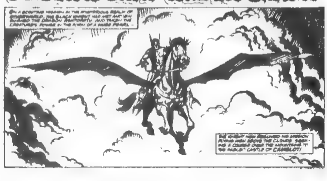
JOURNEY INTO OTHERWORLD WITH MERLYN'S CHAMPION ...

BLACK KNIGHT



Ernie Chan will probably be inking ***CONAN*** after #130. That issue is also the last by regular scripter J. M. DeMatteis.

Tim Conrad will be doing a medieval fantasy series for ***EPIC.***

Marvel will begin the publication of a series of ***DENNIS THE MENACE*** digests beginning this December. The digests will contain 96 pages of reprint material and will retail for $1.25. Originally Marvel planned to release one issue every other month; however, current plans call for two seperate issues to be released simultaneously on a bi-monthly schedule.

Marvel Entertainment Group, the animation arm of Marvel Comics announced that Jerry Eisenberg has joined the staff of its production studio. Eisenberg joined the studio as senior producer. His first Marvel project—in association with studio creative director Dennis Marks—is ***SPIDER-MAN AND HIS AMAZING FRIENDS,*** which just debuted as part of NBC's Saturday morning line-up.

Eisenberg has spent nearly three decades in the animation business and has been responsible for numerous series and specials, including ***THUNDARR*** and ***A FLINTSTONE CHRISTMAS.***

Although American fans have not regularly seen either the Black Knight or Captain Britain for some time, British fans have been receiving regular doses of these characters' continuing adventures. These new produced-in-Britain stories featured both Captain Britian and the Black Knight in quasi-historical fantasy adventures set in another dimension.

Don McGregor's and Craig Russell's two-part ***"Killraven"*** story for ***EPIC ILLUSTRATED*** will feature Killraven's long-delayed confrontation with his brother Deathraven.

The one-shot ***SILVER SURFER*** comic book scripted by Stan Lee and plotted and drawn by John Byrne will go on sale in December. It will be sold through direct-market channels only. It will retail for $1.00 and will contain forty-eight pages of story and art.

According to Byrne's earlier announcements, the story will feature the Silver Surfer's escape from Earth, his return to his home planet, and the final fearsome fate of Zenn-La.

Marvel has tentative plans to produce a ***WONDER MAN*** comic book and an ***"Ant-Man"*** series.

GENERAL

Thru Black Holes Comix will be publishing ***QUEEN OF HAIRY FLIES***, an underground featuring the work of Spain, S. Clay Wilson, and eight other artists. The book will have 36 pages of 60 lb. white stock. The interior pages will be in black-and-white, although there will be full-color covers. It will retail for $1.50.

THE COMICS JOURNAL has made some staff changes. Dwight R. Decker will be assuming the editorship of the magazine in early October. Gary Groth will become ***THE JOURNAL***'s executive editor; Kim Thompson will transfer to Zam Inc. in order to become the editor of ***AMAZING HEROES***.

On being asked whether or not there will be major changes in ***THE JOURNAL***'s editorial approach, Groth replied, "I don't think there'll be any substantial changes." He explained that Decker's main projects will include getting more feature articles into the magazine and arranging interviews with comics professionals who are not generally reported upon. No firm plans, though, have been decided upon.

Thompson will be adding more material to ***AMAZING HEROES***, according to Groth, but no decision has been made as to whether the magazine would add pages or simply fit more material into the same space. Thompson's new plans for the magazine have not been firmed up.

A selection of Sunday strips taken from Gus Arriola's ***GORDO*** comic strip have been reprinted under the title of ***GORDO'S CAT***. Although reprinted in black-and-white only, the selection still provides an excellent introduction to Arriola's style, composition, and sense of humor. It is available from Oak Tree Publications, Inc, San Diego, Ca. and retails for $6.95.

According to a press release from WaRp Graphics, ***ELFQUEST #11*** will be released in early October. Entitled "Lair of the Bird Spirits," this latest installment will introduce the mysterious "bird-spirits" of legend and contain the fate of those elves who were captured in issue #10.

The magazine will contain 40 pages (32 pages of story/art) and will retailed for $1.50.

The Director of the third "***Star Wars***" movie, ***THE RETURN OF THE JEDI***, will be Richard Marquand.

New Media Publishing's ***ADVENTURE ILLUSTRATED***, the first in its line of graphic magazines, will be released in October. It will contain Doug Moench's and Bill Sienkiewicz's "***Magenta Core,***" John D. Warner's and Tom Sutton's "***Matrix,***" and Mark Evanier's and Mike Sekowsky's "***Ryder***" (all science fiction series). Pat Boyette's "***The Stinger,***" a historical adventure strip, will also be included, as will a chapter of Owen Wister's ***THE VIRGINIAN*** (illustrated by Don Heck), and a cover by Jim Starlin.

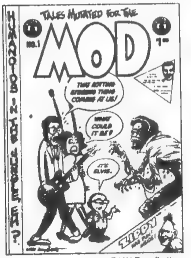
Each of those comics series will be continuing features of ***ADVENTURE ILLUSTRATED***, except for "***Ryder,***" which will move into ***Al***'s companion magazine, ***FANTASY ILLUSTRATED***, which will be on sale in December.

Paul Gulacy, Craig Russell, Dan Spiegle, Steve Ditko, and Doug Wildey will each be doing work for NMP in the near future.

Previous announcements that Jack Kirby's ***CAPTAIN VICTORY #1*** might be reprinted (due to damages to the original print run sustained by the original print run during a shipping/trucking accident) seem to have been premature. According to Steve Schanes of Pacific Comics, the publisher of ***CAPTAIN VICTORY,*** many of the purportedly damaged copies were salvaged from the trucking accident. These "reclaimed" issues plus an unknown printing overrun of 8,000 copies were sufficient to cover the original orders for the title. Schanes went on to say, however, that re-orders on the first issue have been brisk and that Pacific had underestimated the buyer response to the book.

Pacific Comics' second title, ***STARSLAYER***, has been delayed. Created, written, and pencilled/inked by Mike Grell, the series was originally scheduled to debut late this summer. Mike Grell sustained an eye injury during a freak fencing accident, and work was delayed while he recovered. Steve Schanes has now received the artwork for the first issue and expects that readers will be able to pick up the first issue in October.

Pacific Comics has also announced that Neal Adams will be developing a new title for their nascent comics line. The bi-monthly titled is scheduled to first appear in early 1982. More details will be available next issue.



©1981 Terry Beatty

Denis Kitchen has announced the publication of ***TALES MUTATED FOR THE MOD***, a publication billed as "a new wave comic book." It is edited by Terry Beatty, the artist of the "***Ms. Tree***" series appearing in ***ECLIPSE*** magazine. The comic includes work by Bill Griffith, Rodney Schroeter, George Kochell, Gary Kato, and several others. It retails for $1.50

Pacific Comics is issuing a series of Wendy Pini prints entitled "***The Three Spirits of Life.***" The suite of three prints will be signed, numbered, and limited to 1,000 copies. To "insure that Ms. Pini's fans all have a chance to own" their own set, the orders will be limited to one per customer.

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DC

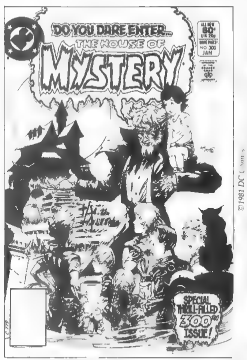
DC is reportedly negotiating with Anne McCaffrey concerning comics adaptation rights for ***DRAGONFLIGHT***, the first of her ***"Dragon..."*** series.

Nelson Bridwell and Bob Rozakis will be collaborating on the ***"Dial 'H' for Hero"*** series, instead of alternating stories as previously planned. The series is set to appear in the back of ***THE NEW ADVENTURES OF SUPERBOY***, and is currently being drawn by Trevor Von Eeden.

Upcoming in ***DC PRESENTS*** is a Superman/Joker team-up, also featuring the Prankster. Superman will be teaming up with some of DC's lesser-exposed heroes in the near future, including the ***"Dial 'H' for Hero"*** kids and Nelson Bridwell's International Super-Heroes (from ***SUPER FRIENDS***).

After a brief stint on the ***"Superman and Batman"*** feature in ***WORLD'S FINEST COMICS***, Don Heck has been moved to ***JUSTICE LEAGUE OF AMERICA***, replacing Rich Buckler. Heck's inker on the ***JLA*** has not yet been chosen.

An upcoming ***"Shazam!"*** story will feature the appearance of Joan Jameson's brother, a notorious mercenary.



The replacement for ***"Dragonsword"*** once its four parts have been run as the back-up story in ***WARLORD*** will be ***"Atlan, Lord of Atlantis."*** The series is the creation of Paul Kupperberg. He will be the writer for the series. Jan Duursema, a graduate of the Kubert School whose previous professional work has appeared in ***SGT. ROCK***, will be the series' artist. Character designs of some of the series' leading players are shown below. The feature will debut in the back of ***WARLORD #55*** and will run for an indefinite period.

The original (Earth-Two, 1940s) Metalo (spelled with one 'l,' unlike his Earth-One counterpart) will return to plague the original (Earth-Two) Superman, in the ***"Mr. and Mrs. Superman"*** feature in ***SUPERMAN FAMILY***.

"Tomahawk" will be revived as the back-up series in three issues of ***UNKNOWN SOLDIER*** Bob Haney will write, and Jose Delbo will pencil.

The demoniac character El Diablo will appear as the central character in a back-up series in ***JONAH HEX***. Gary Cohn will write the character's new adventures, while Dick Ayers will provide the artwork.

DC has announced a number of new inking assignments. Bob Smith, who has been inking Carmine Infantino's pencils on ***THE FLASH***, has been appointed the inker for Scott Shaw!'s ***CAPTAIN CARROT*** pencils. Dennis Jensen will replace Smith on ***THE FLASH***. Rodin Rodriguez, whose work has appeared in the various DC mystery anthologies and the ***"Hawkman"*** series in ***WORLD's FINEST***, will embellish Ernie Colon's work on ***ARAK #5***. Mike DeCarlo will ink ***GREEN LANTERN #150*** over Joe Staton's pencils. Finally, Klaus Janson will definitely ink Gene Colan's pencils appearing in ***BATMAN #343*** and ***DETECTIVE #510*** and might become the regular inker for Colan's Batman work.

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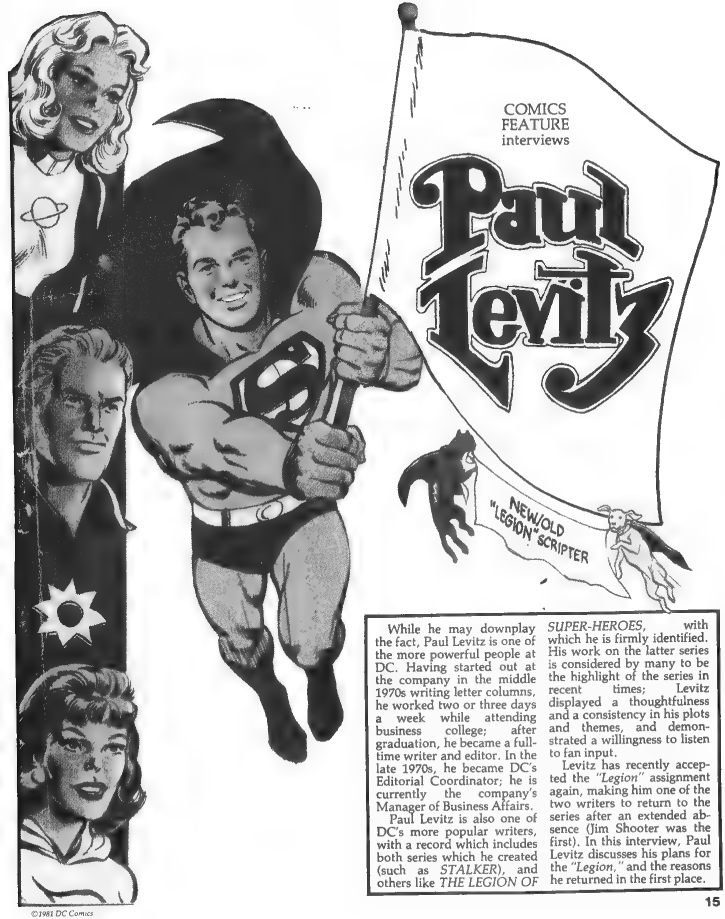

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While he may downplay the fact, Paul Levitz is one of the more powerful people at DC. Having started out at the company in the middle 1970s writing letter columns, he worked two or three days a week while attending business college; after graduation, he became a full-time writer and editor. In the late 1970s, he became DC's Editorial Coordinator; he is currently the company's Manager of Business Affairs.

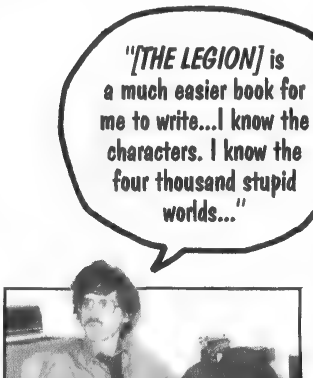
Paul Levitz is also one of DC's more popular writers, with a record which includes both series which he created (such as *STALKER*), and others like *THE LEGION OF SUPER-HEROES*, with which he is firmly identified. His work on the latter series is considered by many to be the highlight of the series in recent times; Levitz displayed a thoughtfulness and a consistency in his plots and themes, and demonstrated a willingness to listen to fan input.

Levitz has recently accepted the *"Legion"* assignment again, making him one of the two writers to return to the series after an extended absence (Jim Shooter was the first). In this interview, Paul Levitz discusses his plans for the *"Legion,"* and the reasons he returned in the first place.

COMICS FEATURE editors Richard Howell and Carol Kalish interviewed Levitz at the DC offices in the Warner Communications Building in late Summer, 1981, shortly after it was announced that Levitz would be returning to *THE LEGION*. This interview was edited by Richard Howell and then by Paul Levitz. It was approved by Levitz. It was transcribed by Kurt Busiek.

HOWELL: What sort of commitment do you have to ***THE LEGION?*** It must be fairly powerful to draw you out of all your other responsibilities, for a monthly book.

LEVITZ: Well, I loved it as a kid. It's always been a book that I enjoy. I enjoyed writing it the two years I did it. It's something I had wanted to do very much. I gave it up in 1978 because my workload was just too high as a freelancer. At that point I was writing ***THE LEGION***, and "***The Justice Society***," and "***The Huntress***," and something else too, I don't even remember what else anymore. But it was pages upon pages upon pages. I was overaging writing about sixty pages a month, on top of my staff work, and it was just too much for me. So I cut back, relaxed a bit, not out of dislike for ***THE LEGION***, but it was too big a piece to keep in the schedule, if I was really going to cut back. Now, with having given up ***THE WORLD'S GREATEST SUPER-HEROES*** newspaper strip some months back, I have time to take something on. ***THE LEGION*** came open. It's a much easier book for me to write than it is for most of the staff, because having written it already, I know the characters. I know the four thousand stupid worlds we've established across the galaxy, which ones have three-toed people, which one has the beast-men, and which one is the unexplored planet where they have super-technology and weapons no one's ever seen before. I have it all in a notebook, so all I have to do is flip it open, and I don't have to do all that research all over again. So it's not as tough as it seems. Should be fun.



HOWELL: Have you been keeping track of the series since you left it in 1978?

LEVITZ: Not too closely. What I did when I decided to take it over again, or actually just before I decided to take it over again, was I sat down, and I re-read the series, skimming through everything of the earlier material in ***ADVENTURE COMICS*** and ***ACTION COMICS***, and ***SUPERBOY*** up until I wrote it, then re-reading my own material, and then re-reading everything that followed it, and updating my notebook for those three years—because of course I hadn't bothered to keep any of that up to date. I didn't who the hell Blok was, or where he came from, or what he was doing there. And that resulted in about four pages of notes to Mike Barr of things I'd like to do with the strip: loose plot threads, characters I want to see come back, questions I want to ask about the characters and where they can go. And that became the outline for what we're going to do.

HOWELL: Did you and Mike discuss at all what groundwork Roy Thomas had laid during his short tenure on ***THE LEGION***?

LEVITZ: Well, I read all of Roy's material, and what he had done there. Roy also sent in a couple of pages of ideas which he had had that he hadn't had a chance to do, one or two of which are the sort of thing I'd like to do. Usually the case in comics is that you tend to take the ideas that ***you*** see in what another writer wrote, rather than what those other writers actually had in mind. Very rarely when you take over a strip do you bother sitting down with the previous writer and talking about what he had in mind when he did something. You look and see what it is that he did that struck you as something. It's more fun that way. The best example of that outside our field is a book that came out last year, after having been written I think about fifty years ago, ***THE FLOATING ADMIRAL***. The Mystery Writers of Britain Club, whatever their correct name was, had gotten together, and done a detective story a chapter at a time, without ever telling each other what they were leading up to or where it was. And each one was required not only to write the next chapter, but to propose a solution based on their chapter, plus all that had gone before. Dorothy Sayers and Agatha Christie were two of the writers. The others I don't even remember the names of, but there were about eight or ten people. And it was a fascinating little exercise, of course. Very jumpy from style to style, but interesting to see how each one interpreted the mysteries differently. They did it originally for fun, but it was reissued as a mass-market paperback because, of course, of all the interest in both Christie's and Sayers' work. The detective in us all likes to solve all those riddles, and say, "Now why was that there, how can you put those pieces together into a universe that fits?"

HOWELL: Is there any financial disadvantage to using ideas that the previous writer came up with? That is, do you forfeit your plotting fee?

LEVITZ: Well, it depends on the deal you make. In many instances, if you just take from whatever was printed and published, no. That's material he's already sold the company. If I pick up the phone and say "Roy, what did you plan to do in the next issue? Can I use your plot?" then I'd have to make a deal with Roy. And sometimes—most frequently in this business—it's given away in trade for some day when you'll give them something. The classic of that was that ***GIANT-SIZE DEFENDERS*** that [Steve] Gerber wrote with fourteen plotters listed, because everyone did it around the coffee house that night. But we're all kibitzing with each other all the time, and we're all giving ideas away. They're both the most valuable things a writer has, and the cheapest things a writer has. A good writer always has more ideas than he can possibly fit in his stories. And you never have enough good ideas for the story you're doing at the time. So it balances out. I think Roy had offered some suggestions free, I had always offered suggestions on ***THE LEGION***, when I wasn't working on it, free. I've also bought ideas from people in my time, and once or twice plotted stories for other people to dialogue—that last relatively rarely.

HOWELL: What sort of ideas have you got coming up?

LEVITZ: It's hard to say yet, completely, because I'm starting into

WEIRD WESTERN TALES
DC
JONAH HEX
Adventure Comics
AQUAMAN
AND DEATH SHALL OVERTHROW!
"Five years ago, by my count, I think we were publishing three books a month [which] I could read."

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the series. I've just plotted my first story, and nothing beyond that. What I like about ***THE LEGION***, that I want to get back to, that I think it's been missing for the past couple of years, is the science fiction of it. We haven't seen enough alien worlds. We haven't seen enough of how the Thirtieth Century is different from our century, visually, sociologically, psychologically, scientifically, whatever level you want to take it on. I want to get more idea content into the book. I don't know if you're familiar with ***2000 A.D.***, the British comic weekly. I think it's a magnificent comic, because you read that comic, and in a four-or-five page story, they get in four new ideas. All right, maybe three of the ideas are as brilliant as a man stuffing bananas in his ear. But that density of ideas in one weekly comic means that you come out with 2 or 3 ideas that are really intriguing. Not all of them are unique to ***2000 A.D.***, but usually that's the first place you've seen them in a comic. They're exploring. Some work, some don't. I want to get some more of that back into ***THE LEGION***. I think that was always one of the most interesting things to me as a kid, in the Ed Hamilton or Jerry Siegel stories for the book. Maybe a fusion power sphere wouldn't work, and isn't the way a civilization would do it in the Thirtieth Century,"but it sure as hell was interesting to a fourth grader, who learned what fusion was in response to seeing that long before most fourth graders normally knew what fusion or fission was. I love toying around with the stuff, and with a 25-page book, certainly you can do that. ***THE LEGION*** is a book that needs the space.

HOWELL: With the number of characters it has, it could use a lot more, especially since the book can obviously be very trying on the artists at DC.

LEVITZ: Oh, I think it's our hardest book to draw, because not only do you have so many characters, but they are not as distinctive as characters as the Justice League characters are. Probably we have as many characters in the JLA and JSA combined. Also, if you want to see Superman, you've got forty years of Curt Swan's work, right up there on a shelf for reference. If you want to see Batman, you've got plenty of stuff. You know what the characters are supposed to look like, you can get an idea of how they move. They mean something to you, and they stick in your mind. On the other hand, not too many people remember off-hand what Element Lad looks like. After you draw ***THE LEGION*** for a couple of years, you'll remember it. . . .

KALISH: Painfully, but you'll remember it.

LEVITZ: Yeah, but it takes a while. You certainly don't remember any distinctive actions of his. I mean, with Superman, you know the "flying up in the sky," you know him "smashing through the wall." You know the "intense look staring down with the X-ray vision or microscopic vision into something." With Batman, you've got the "swinging across the city." What do you have for Element Lad? Add to that the fact that you have to create new worlds all the time. Perforce, everything is entirely new. All right, if you're drawing a ***"Superman"*** story, and you've got to draw Metropolis, it's city buildings. All right, if the writer's being real tough and setting it in Paris, you've got to open your ***NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC***, and get out the Eiffel Tower and Notre Dame, and the Sacre Coeur, and the Arc de Triomphe. If the writer's being a real pain in the ass, you might have to get up and go to the library, and get "swipe" on a city you haven't got material on, or a particular building, or a plane, if it calls for a Boeing 727. With ***THE LEGION***, it's all whole cloth. Every single thing has to be created out of your imagination, and it's "All right, now envision a society in which everybody has one leg, three arms, antennae, and their city is composed of tightropes strung across a sea." Okay, you can get a visual picture in your head after a couple of minutes, and maybe you can translate that to art. We'll leave aside whether it's stupid or not, because the artist has to try to make that stupid idea into something remerely plausible, so the editor won't giggle him out of his office. But it's all whole cloth. Issue after issue, month after month.

LIMITED COLLECTORS' EDITION presents
SUPERBOY and the LEGION OF SUPER-HEROES
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"[THE LEGION] is a real bitch of an assignment. I don't blame anyone for not wanting it. I'm not at all surprised we have problems talking people into it."

There's almost nothing you can pick up from a previous ***LEGION***, because you're dealing with a whole universe. The book's been around a few years with modern style art, but most of the material for it was created before the current wave of science fiction came in. Therefore most of the stuff you can't swipe. Look at a Legion cruiser circa 1966—you can't put that in a comic today.

HOWELL: With the steering wheel and the gas pedal? (laughter)

LEVITZ: I don't think they had gas pedals, but they did have steering wheels.

KALISH: They had brakes.

LEVITZ: Yeah?

KALISH: They had pedals. . . you braked. . . (laughter)

LEVITZ: Missed that.

KALISH: They might have even had hot-rod ships. I can see it now, y'know, in your V-8 rocket ship. . .

HOWELL: Raccoon tails. . . (laughter)

LEVITZ: Yeah, you know, you're right. I remember ***"The Evil Hand of The Luck Lords"*** one. That's the one with the brakes. Yup. You

can't really get too many of your ideas from there. And I mean, it's enough work for an artist, on any strip, to create a way to tell a story visually, imaginatively, and get dynamics, get excitement into the material. That's hard work—to portray faces with character, to invent a new villain or two every couple of months, to invent a new supporting character, to make them realistic people, to get real character into the five or six people you have in a scene. Here we've got thirty people in the average issue, a whole new planet, a race of aliens, and of course we want the distinctive alien, who's going to be be the master villain, four super-scientific devices, and by the way, just between all of this, let's make sure that we invent a new Legion headquarters at least once every two years, so you don't have any swipe material on that either. God, I don't blame any artist who doesn't want to do that book!

KALISH: And you ***have*** to change the Legion outfits.

LEVITZ: Oh, sure. Sure. Stupider every time, please. (laughter) Oh God, I wouldn't want to draw that book, if I was an artist. I mean, if I was any other writer, I wouldn't want to write it, either. I suffered the pleasant accident of growing up on the book, so I knew a lot about it from that time; it was the first comic I collected. I had finished my ***ADVENTURE COMICS*** set about the time they got out of ***ADVENTURE COMICS***, so that tells you how far back that interest goes. And from having written it the first time, towards the beginning of my writing career—when I had more time and more energy than I have today—I have this nifty notebook of all these facts, figures, planets, and how things can work. If I had to take over the book for the first time today. . . "No thank you. No point whatsoever."

HOWELL: You can't find any artist with the same affliction?

LEVITZ: Cockrum had that problem (laughter), but he got smart. To date, we have not found anyone else quite as foolish. Generally speaking, since Swan left the book, in. . .

HOWELL: . . . long ago. . .

LEVITZ: . . . '67? '66? [1968]

KALISH: And swore never to return.

LEVITZ: The book has either been drawn by artists who could not get other regular series work, or who were doing their first assignments. It was Cockrum's first real assignment. It was Grell's first real assignment. It was Sherman's first real assignment. It was Nasser's first real assignment. It was, I think, Staton's second assignment. It was Jimmy Janes' first assignment.

It's a real bitch of an assignment. I don't blame anyone for not wanting it. I'm not at all surprised we have problems talking people into it. And it's not a matter of money. If you invented a special ***LEGION OF SUPER-HEROES*** page rate, it wouldn't cure anything anyhow, because the book's still a pain. And even if you pay for the extra time the pain consumes, you have to put all that energy into doing things that artists don't enjoy doing. Good artists enjoy being creative, returning to the beginning of our discussion. They want to put a little of themselves into the work, they want to do something new, they want their approaches, their ideas. They don't want to spend all their time figuring out how to do one-footed, three-armed people with antennae who live on a planet of tightropes suspended over water.

HOWELL: That's certainly creative (chuckle) in its own way.

LEVITZ: To quote an old Marty Pasko line, so is putting bananas in your ear, but it doesn't make a good story. (laughter) It's a very tough book. I have no idea who's drawing the book. I think Pat Broderick's doing one of my stories, I think Ernie Colon may do some, I think Jose Delbo may do some of the back-ups. I don't know.

KALISH: Sounds like the burn-out rate on ***THE LEGION*** is getting shorter and shorter and shorter—down from several issues to just one. Fill-ins.

LEVITZ: I hope not. I'd really like to work with one artist for a lengthy period of time, but I don't blame anybody. . .

HOWELL: You had some trouble with that last time, didn't you?

LEVITZ: Oh, I had a lot of trouble with that last time. I wrote ***THE LEGION*** for two years, and I worked with Sherman, Nasser, and Grell. In that time also, Estrada and Tuska drew it, but I didn't work with them. There were Staton, Chaykin, Simonson, Starlin,

OH GRANDAD, I SHOULD HAVE REALIZED THOSE CREATURES WERE MY OWN ANCIENT ANCESTORS!
AND THE MIRROR-IMAGE LEGION IS LATER FOR YOUR OWN PERSONAL HARELOCK!!
THAT'S RIGHT, KRON, YOU AND I ARE...
©1981 Marvel Comics Group
DAVE AND THE GANG BATHE!
WHEEHA-HA-HAAAA!
PAY HIM NO MANDY, MY FRIEND—AFTER ALL TENGU NO SPEAK BEFORE HE THINKS!
I BELIEVE YOU HAVE BARGAIN US FAR MORE THAN WE HAVE LOST!
BUT YOUR CITY?
WAS SOMETHING TO WHICH I'VE NO OUTDRAW!
©1981 DC Comics

"You write to what your artist does best...you're not going to write the same story for Curt Swan that you are for Jim Starlin."

Arv Jones. . .

HOWELL: All in two years? That's about one per book.

LEVITZ: No, that's an average of about two issues each.* I apologize if I didn't hit everyone. I may have forgotten one of the guys I actually liked working with. But you can't really write terribly well when you've got different artists every issue, because, under normal circumstances, you write to what your artist does best. I mean, you're not going to write the same story for Curt Swan that you are for Jim Starlin. They do very different things very well. I think they're both brilliant artists, but. . .

KALISH: . . . they're different.

LEVITZ: Yeah. And hopefully you can eventually settle down with an artist. I mean, another reason I'll probably write ***"The Hun-***

* This statistic is somewhat misleading in that it fails to specify that most of the Levitz ***"Legion"*** issues featured more than one story per issue.

©1981 N. Harrison
WELL THAT'S IT, TEAM! WE BLEW IT. ONLY WAY OUT NOW WOULD BE FOR A TIME RELIEF TO APPEAR OUT OF THIN AIR—
"I think [2000 A.D. is] a magnificent comic, because you read that comic and in a four or five page story, they get in four new ideas."

This scene is from ***2000 A.D.***, September 13, 1980. The story adapted Harry Harrison's ***"The Stainless Steel Rat Saves the World," with the script by Kelvin Gosnell and art by Carlos Ezquerra.***

tress" forever is that Joe Staton will probably draw it forever, and I can write [for] Joe Staton's artwork very quickly—and I plot for Joe Staton very quickly, because we've done over fifty stories together. And by that time, you know exactly what the other person needs, to do their job, and you get comfy with it. And that helps. A ***"Huntress"*** story is a very smooth process for me. Sitting down to do a job with an artist I've never worked with before is a much more complicated one.

HOWELL: Do you feel that there's any atypical constraint—or ***lack*** of constraint, actually—on you as a scripter and as a plotter, because you're operating out of the management end, also?

LEVITZ: I've worried about that occasionally over the years. As a writer, and as an editor, I've always believed that writers desperately need editors—if for nothing else than to tell them when they're being stupid, because we are all stupid on a fairly regular basis. Your question wouldn't be valid necessarily because I'm in the business end—it's simply, I think, people working for companies in any capacity of any responsibility, whether it's as editors, assistant editors, executives in other areas, tend to get less editing than they would if they were the exact same person outside. I think that's usually a mistake in every single case.

KALISH: Is that because your peers, the other editors in the company, assume that you should know what you're doing ***and*** expect you to do it...

LEVITZ: Sometimes. Sometimes it's because someone doesn't want to say, "Oh, God, take the whole thing home and rewrite it," because they're going to have to see you again the next day, and every day after that. You have to be kinder towards people you have to live with than to people you're going to see once every couple of months. Even once every couple of weeks. If you're dealing with a free-lance writer whose work you don't like, you can tell him, "Go away and don't come back again." If you're dealing with a free-lance writer who happens to work in the office next to yours, you're still going to have to stare at that not-so-cheery face every morning, saying to you, "Ngarhllrghlarrmorning," and that's a problem of an essentially incestuous business. There have certainly been occasions when I have thought something I did was edited perhaps less than perhaps would have had benefitted the work—because of things like that—but by and large, I have been pleased that we have a lot of people with a lot of editorial integrity in this business who will fight for what they believe in, regardless of anything else. I mean, Julie [Schwartz] has always been my archetype about that. Julie absolutely would not bother to talk to me about a script, much less ever ***ask*** me to do one, unless he liked my work. Nothing else has ever mattered to him over the years, and I've seen him tell person after person after person in one position of authority after another, "No, I don't like your stuff. Go away, don't bother me." You develop a capacity for editorial integrity by doing the same thing for that many years, that solidly. That makes you a rock. And I always feel more comfortable about being a fairly lightly-edited writer in ***general***, by the fact that Julie edits me fairly lightly. If he thinks I don't need that much, I can accept that as being as objective as anyone is, and therefore it probably isn't that much of a problem. It does worry me, but it's an on-going problem of this business. I mean, right up and down the line, almost everybody free-lances for somebody else, and that part of it is not healthy, no matter which way you measure it. There's a lovely tradition in book publishing: you cannot be published by the company you're working for. If you write a novel, it doesn't matter how great your publisher thinks it is, he will not publish that book. You ***must*** take it to another house, even if your employer says, "I'll lose out on a fortune." There's a tremendous common-sense in that in avoiding the kind of problem you're talking about. But comics can't afford that because it's too small a business. There aren't fifteen different publishing companies doing the same thing, and it's so hard to get good people you want to get every page you can out of anybody you've got, and you don't want them anywhere else. At one point, I think 30% of our line was being written by people who also collected a staff salary. I think that's way down now, with Roy [Thomas] and Gerry [Conway] and Marv [Wolfman] as the volume workhorses of the company. But it's a problem.

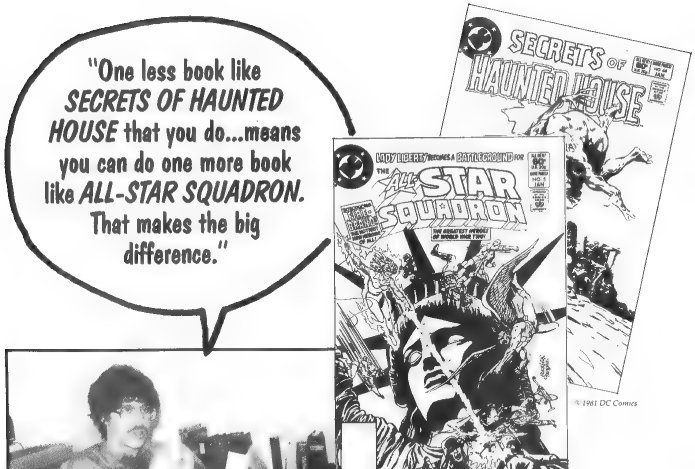
HOWELL: You have always had a very good handle on fan tastes and the fan marketplace, and it seems from indicators we've seen that DC's fan profile is going up fairly rapidly.

LEVITZ: I hope so. We're trying.

HOWELL: What have you got to say about—the whole business about a fan profile in the first place, and consequently, what DC in general and you in particular are doing about it?

LEVITZ: Well, I think a fan profile consists of what a portion of your audience thinks of your books. Fundamentally that's the root of it. If you're publishing great comic books, from the subjective point of view of any market you've got, they're going to think you're a great company, providing you don't take out advertisements saying, "We burn babies for breakfast."

HOWELL: And maybe even then.


"One less book like SECRETS OF HAUNTED HOUSE that you do...means you can do one more book like ALL-STAR SQUADRON. That makes the big difference."
SECRETS OF HAUNTED HOUSE
LADY LIBERTY BECOMES A BATTLEGROUND!
THE ALL STAR SQUADRON
THE GREATEST HEROES OF WORLD WAR TWO!
© 1981 DC Comics

LEVITZ: Maybe even then. You still have a fighting chance. If you publish bad comic books, again in that same subjective point of view, even if you hand out gold bars on the street to everyone who reads one, they're not going to think you're a great company. They're going to think you're a very stupid company, but a great sucker. Five years ago, by my count, I think we were publishing three books a month I could read. And I don't think my taste is incredibly dissimilar from the average member of the fan market.

KALISH: What were those books, by the way?

LEVITZ: I was prejudiced. I liked myself on ***AQUAMAN***, what David Michelinie was doing on ***UNKNOWN SOLDIER***, and what Mike Fleisher was doing on ***JONAH HEX***. There wasn't really much of anything else that I cared about circa 1976, just before Jenette came in, and Sol was promoted. The rest of the line... some were professional, competent, solid; some were a real big yawn; some really should have been burned—preferably before they ever saw the light of day. I think the proportion is almost the reverse now. I think all of our books are ***at least*** professional and competent, and I think a fairly high number of them are worth reading. I think that's the root of why the fan perception of DC changed. Now, obviously, there's ways we accomplished that. I mean, having, in rough chronological order, Gerry Conway, Len Wein, Marv Wolfman, Roy Thomas come over to write comic books for us has a lot to do with that. Those are all people whose comics I liked reading, I think most of the fans liked reading, therefore it improves the odds that they're going to enjoy the stuff. Having more exciting artists come to work for us again; Gene Colan, George Perez, George Tuska, Carmine Infantino. Having new artists come to the fore; whether it's Mike Grell, or whoever. (I'm slighting lots of people by doing it this way, and I can't apologize enough, but I'm answering this in stream-of-consciousness.) It's more material people care about. There's also changing the magazines. One less book like ***SECRETS OF HAUNTED HOUSE*** that you do, that intrinsically has never been very interesting to this market, that means you can do one more book like ***ALL-STAR SQUADRON***. That makes the big difference. None of it would help if the books were stupid. If the books are good, it almost doesn't matter how many times we show up at comics conventions and what we say and how we do so. If the books are good, and then we back that up, by saying, "Hey! Collectors' stores are a really good thing! Comics conventions are a good thing! Let's do some promotion work for it! Let's have a Roger Slifer and a Paul Kupperberg hired on for the direct sale market alone! Let's think about what we can do to be supportive of this end of our business!" Well, sure that's going to help more. But Archie Comics and Harvey Comics could do all of that there is to do in the universe, and no one would really care, because the average comics fan doesn't care about an Archie comic or a Harvey comic. It all is rooted in the editorial content. We-the-business-people-at-DC ***cannot sell*** comic book material that comes out of the editorial department if it isn't already sellable. No matter what I do, I cannot take ***SGT. ROCK*** and sell it to a fan market. I can sell the hell out of it to Warner Publisher Services on newsstands. I can sell it in every PX across the globe, but I can't make ***you*** care. That doesn't mean ***you're*** right, or ***you're*** wrong, or the other part of the market is right or wrong. But if I want to sell to you, I have to produce comics ***you*** like. And I think we've gone an awful long way towards producing a lot more titles that the fan market cares about. We produce a lot more titles I enjoy reading, and I'm fairly representative of that market, or at least I'm fairly representative of a portion of that market. I'm less representative of the whole today than I was a few years ago, because the market's changed a lot, and I have to be aware of that.

THE ONCE AND FUTURE LORD OF THE LEGION

character ©1981 DC Comics

An Overview of the "Legion of Super-Heroes" Series under Paul Levitz

by Bob Soron

With about thirty stories of the series to his credit, Paul Levitz has written fewer tales than any other ostensibly-regular writer of *"The Legion of Super-Heroes."* *"Legion"* fans were disappointed to see Roy Thomas leave so quickly. Fortunately, however, Levitz is familiar not only with *"The Legion"* but also with its fandom, and, if the past is any indication, the series' future is in good hands.

Six years ago, though, when news was just spreading that Levitz would be assuming writing chores on the strip, reaction was exactly the opposite. Fans had agreed that Cary Bates was not doing outstanding work on the series (Bates thought so, too) and they were not very sorry to see him leave. But the fans were also hesitant about Levitz, who at the time for the most part was an unknown quantity.

Levitz tested the waters carefully before he entered. He sent a letter to Interlac member (and *LEGION OUTPOST* staffer) Jay Zilber, who published it in his apazine. The letter was essentially a few paragraphs of gossip about his plans for the strip, with a note at the end mentioning that he would be very interested in seeing those apazines which commented on his *"Legion"* work. This alone scored him brownie points with *"Legion"* fandom; most old-timers in Interlac remembered fondly the reader participation of the super-teens' *ADVENTURE COMICS* run, and this was a step toward re-establishing that bond.

A few months later, Levitz's first issue of *SUPERBOY AND THE LEGION OF SUPER-HEROES* was released. It won approval with some reservations, and the consensus was that it was a good start.

"And Who Shall Lead Them" was the lead story in that issue (#225), and it featured Wildfire's assumption of leadership of the Legion. The plot which Levitz used had a long history in the strip (member X is to become Leader, and member Y tries to stop member X, since great danger is going to befall the Leader.) It was generally agreed that Levitz's mistakes were choosing Superboy for member Y (understandable given that, back then, it *was* still Superboy's comic, but the result was a mis-characterized Kal-El) and his decision to have Mon-El stop Superboy early in the story with a roundhouse punch (Levitz explained that he viewed Mon-El as Superboy's big brother in relationship if not in lineage). Those were fairly forgiveable errors, and since it was Levitz's first story, relative unfamiliarity with the characters could be rationalized.

And there *were* facets of the story which fans appreciated. Besides featuring appearances by the ubiquitous Superboy, Wildfire, and Lightning Lad, the story's cast was primarily Legionnaires who were less frequently seen: Dream Girl, Shadow Lass, and Ultra Boy. A new group of villains was introduced (the Resource Raiders) who would play a role in future issues. While there were conflicts among the Legionnaires, they were capable of acting as a team when required, something not frequently shown since their series left *ADVENTURE COMICS*.

WELL, MISTER WILDFIRE... COME LATELY? WILL YOU GIVE UP THE JOB TO THE ONE WHO DESERVES IT?
DESERVES IT? MUST MAN, ALL YOU DESERVE IS A SLAP ACROSS THE FACE TO BRING YOU TO YOUR SENSES!
MIGHT, WILDFIRE.
AND I'M JUST THE GUY TO GIVE IT TO HIM!
©1981 DC Comics

The result of Levitz's first *"Legion"* story was "a mis-characterized Kal-El..."

The back-up tale, *"A Matter of Priorities,"* shared some of its immediate predecessor's virtues. The featured characters were Princess Projectra, Sun Boy, and Timber Wolf, and their mission was again one that would play a role in future stories—to get an ambassador to another world safely, so that he might try to avoid an imminent war with the Dominion Worlds. Both Ambassador Relnic and the Dominators would show up again. Other than that, though, the story was trivial, a simple human interest piece. Unfortunately for its immediate quality, the story was drawn by Mike Nasser, who was incapable of drawing teenagers (the characters tended to look like younger children), and for the most part the story was not given much attention.

Levitz's second issue also introduced a change to the Legion; Dawnstar, an American Indian mutant whose powers included tracking ability and limited invulnerability, was introduced and invited to join the group. Dawnstar was designed and co-created by former *"Legion"* artist Mike Grell, and, although Grell had been replaced on the book by Jim Sherman, the Dawnstar character—being owned by DC itself—appeared as projected. The change in artists was a particular improvement in this story, for a visual display of Dawnstar's powers required a sense of design much stronger than Grell's.

The story again featured the Resource Raiders, this time following them back and forth across the space sector as the Legion tried to destroy their organization. The leader of the Raiders was shown to be a disembodied brain, yet another character who would figure in future stories.

The back-up tale in that issue (#226) tied up some loose ends (and confused some others) from an unconcluded Jim Shooter story published shortly before the Levitz take-over. Those plot-lines were finally resolved in a Gerry Conway-written story in the next issue.

Issues #228-9 featured a two-part story in which Levitz instituted yet another change in the membership—a member died. *"That a World Might Live...A Legionnaire Must Die!"* featured the events preceding World War VII. To anyone with a passing familiarity with the famous *"Adult Legion"* story of *ADVENTURE #354-5*, it was obvious that Legionnaire Chemical King was the member who was to buy the farm. Even if a reader *didn't* know that, however, it became obvious from reading the story. Chemical King's sole function in it was to run around the universe whining about how useless he was. (A typical line of CK's dialogue was, "Tell me *again* how we make *equal* contributions to the Legion, Superboy—only don't ask me to *believe* it!")

Eventually, the Legion caught up with Deregon, the madman who was starting the war, in Australia, and all the Legionnaires save Chemical King were fairly useless in stopping him. Needless to say, in stopping Deregon, Chemical King died a Heroic Death, thus demonstrating that he wasn't so useless after *all*. Would that the character had been developed further than a few eleventh-hour whines, the story could have been as powerful as *"The Death of Ferro Lad"* some eleven years earlier. But after the Chemical King character was introduced, he was immediately ignored, and that situation was only reversed by this final farewell appearance.

"Hunt for a Hero-Killer" was the sequel, and appeared in the following issue. Deregon had disappeared at the end of the previous story (since it was revealed that he was an agent of the Dark Circle—an interplanetary conspiracy out to conquer and enslave the universe—it was assumed that the Circle had summoned him back to explain his failure at starting the World War), and a search of the planet by the most powerful Legionnaires yielded nothing. A member of the Circle was eventually found and he professed ignorance of Deregon's whereabouts.

In the meantime, Lightning Lad, Saturn Girl, Cosmic Boy, and Night Girl (a member of the Substitute Legion) were taking time off, trying to cheer up at an amusement park in 30th-century Smallville. Of course, Deregon just

happened to be holed up there, and the three charter members of the Legion (Night Girl having left, respecting the Legion's obligation to bring the murderer to justice themselves) finished the case.

The two-part *"Death of Chemical King"* story earned more criticism than Levitz's earlier offerings. Aside from the aforementioned lack of subtlety in Chemical King's characterization, the pacing was not terribly good, and Levitz showed a tendency to over-dramatize situations which did not really demand such treatment (as with Saturn Girl's rather unmotivated—and purple—speech of self-justification to the Science Police officer in Smallville). When the five members tracking Deregon broke into the Dark Circle's citadel, they mysteriously vanished, and it was not until a rushed panel at the end of the story that the readers discovered that Light Lass had brought them back via their Warp Transport mechanism (since Deregon had already been caught). This broken structure made the already-fragmented plot even harder to follow.

"The Creature Who Conned the Legion" in ***SUPERBOY AND THE LEGION #230*** was the first Levitz lead feature in which no major event occurred. In Levitz's first three issues, the Legion dealt with a new Leader, a new member, and a death. This time, they only had to deal with a cosmic Hagar the Horrible.

Sden was a tentacled creature in a horned helmet who appeared on Remor, a planet whose inhabitants were being aided by the Legion as the planet underwent massive shocks. Sden tells the Legionnaires that he can stop the damage if only he is given a crystal which would be found buried deep in the heart of the planet. The Legion obliges, albeit suspiciously, but when Superboy hands Sden

Issue #233 featured "...the first really powerful villain in some time."

EXPLAINING! HOW COULD A MERE BOUNDARY MONITOR, EXPLAIN WHAT HAS HAPPENED — TO ME?!
©1981 DC Comics
I WAS WARNED THAT I MIGHT DIE—BUT NOT THAT I WOULD UNDERGO AN INFINITY OF TORTURES THAT WOULD MAKE DEATH WISH FOR DEATH!
IT HURTS... I FELT TOO MUCH! PAIN, VERGE— MY SUFFERING WILL NOT BE FORGIVEN!

"Levitz showed a tendency to over-dramatize situations..."

the chest in which the Legionnaires found the crystal, Sden grabs it and laughs mockingly. He shouts, *"I* caused the quakes that wracked Remor, and now that I have the crystal, I shall summon them again!" Unfortunately, Sden can't resist opening the chest—and when he does, it bursts into flame. Since the story had to be approved by the Comics Code, Sden couldn't be turned into ashes ***a la RAIDERS OF THE LOST ARK***; he was simply captured and brought to the local ***gendarmes.***

The back-up story in that issue was even more trivial, as Bouncing Boy regained his powers (lost in ***SUPERBOY AND THE LEGION #200***). The story was widely ignored then, and some four-and-a-half years later, there seems to be no reason to start giving it any attention.

With issue #231, ***SUPERBOY AND THE LEGION OF SUPER-HEROES*** was given that title officially (it had appeared that way on the cover logo, but the official indicia continued to read only ***SUPERBOY***), and the magazine was made a 48-page monthly with 34 pages of story and art, twice what a 32-page comic then contained. To celebrate, Levitz brought back the Fatal Five, among the series' more heinous villains, in a full-length story.

Levitz's plot this time was reasonable, if a bit unlikely: The Fatal Five had discovered that the chemical composition of the planet Mordan was such that, if the sun nova-ed, the heat would turn the planet into Energite, the universe's most valuable substance. The Five planned to use the Energite to *"buy* a place in this galaxy!" (The only specific plan mentioned was the Emerald Empress', who planned to buy back her throne.)

Levitz unfortunately went a little too far in trying to make the Fatal Five villainous: according to leader Tharok, the nova would also turn the ***citizens*** of Mordan to Energite. A better move, for credibility's sake, would perhaps have been for Levitz to make the Five simply unconcerned with the fate of the Mordanites. Not only would that have avoided the stretching of science in the plot he used, but it would have emphasized the lack of conscience the Five had consistently displayed in previous stories.

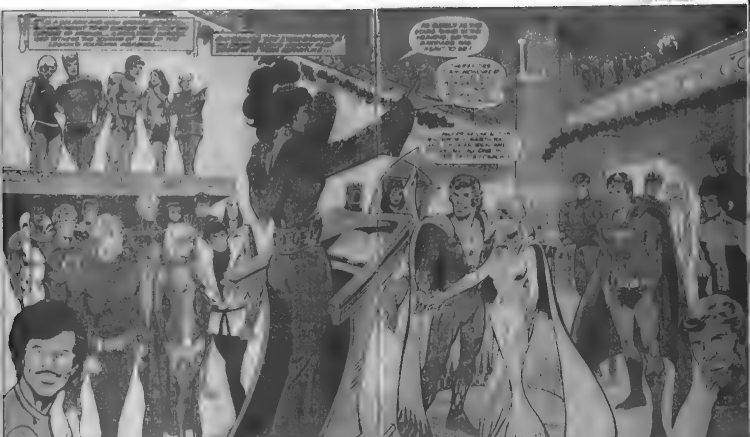
Levitz's next few tales, for the most part, marked time. Issue #233 featured ***"The Infinite Man Who Conquered the Legion,"*** and it was one of the better Levitz efforts, featuring the first really powerful villain in some time. Also, the Infinite Man was a new foe, so he had not lost effectiveness through overexposure, as had the Fatal Five, Mordru, and one or two other villains. Jason Rugarth blamed the Legion's honorary member, Rond Vidar, for the trip that sent him beyond time, past infinity, and into madness. The Legionnaires visited different worlds whose inhabitants had a better perspective on infinity that they, in hopes of stopping and/or curing Rugarth, but to not avail. Finally, Vidar sent the Infinite Man back ***into*** time, where he would (hopefully) be lost forever in infinity. Again, Jim Sherman's sense of design contributed a great deal to the effectiveness of the story, as he was given a chance to draw the Earth's past, present (within the context of the story), and future.

The back-up story, ***"The Final Illusion,"*** was far less effective. Princess Projectra had been acting stranger and stranger, and here she succumbs to a psychic disease. Saturn Girl telepaths a bad dream to "Jeckie," and that doesn't wake her up. Saturn Girl then telepaths a good dream to the fallen Legionnaire, who decides she wants more and wokes up. The art was by Mike Nasser (who conceived the story), and was unfortunate. For instance, the splash page depicts Saturn Girl and Dream Girl standing in the exact same pose, with the exact same expression, and hairdos that vary only slightly; the rest of the art displays as little imagination.

Levitz's next story, in #235, came with the return of Mike Grell, for a fill-in. The artwork also featured characters who had the exact same poses and expressions, and the addition of Vince Colletta as inker only worsened the situation.

The story was yet another addition to the lore of the Legion. Here was a strip which had been around for some two decades, and the lead characters were still being called "boy," "girl," "lad," and what-have-youth. Here was the explanation: a youth serum kept 30th century people young. Superboy could not be told this, because "what human could resist the desire to let his ***loved ones*** live on for centuries?"

This addition was, sadly, apocryphal (and one that has since been contradicted only lately), simply because there are plenty of good reasons for the post-hypnotic suggestion which the Legionnaires gave Superboy: the death of his parents, the existence of Supergirl, every detail of his future life. And the question of the Legionnaires' aging was better left unasked—just as few other DC comics characters age at a normal rate,



That [expletive deleted] Tabloid [was nearly unanimously judged a flop, with some fans deciding] that it wasn't worth the effort to rationalize the story, and put it on a parallel world."

neither do the Legionnaires. Big deal.

And the next issue, #236, was a change-of-pace issue in which the Legionnaires went on vocation. The first story, ***"A World Born Anew,"*** featured a Nixon look-alike who contracted with folks around the universe to do some cosmic landscaping to improve the view in the neighborhood. After a fight scene, Worldsmith (the Nixon ***doppelganger***) pops off into thin air, and it turns out that the area he has remodeled is similar to Easter Island. According to Levitz, Jim Sherman did not use Levitz's plot's original ending. That helps explain the suddenness of the ending, but one wonders why then-editor Al Milgrom did not use the original ending.

The second story, ***"Mon-El's One-Man War,"*** was a fairly trivial tale to all appearances. While Mon-El is exploring deep space, he happens upon a Khund invasion of an energy mine. Mon incapacitates the ship's power supply, and once that is done, he flits off to enjoy his interstellar cruising, muttering that eventually he'll get Wildfire to arrange a United Planets session to consider whether the Khunds are a threat. This story also featured more of Mike Nasser's hilarious ideas of anatomy and design.

The final tale, ***"Words Never Spoken,"*** features Lightning Lad and Saturn Girl undergoing psychic danger tests to see if they are more committed to the Legion or each other. (The Legion, remember, did not allow married members.) Each other won out, and that led into the big wedding the following month.

ALL-NEW COLLECTORS' EDITION #C-55 provided us with ***"The Millenium Massacre."*** The story was nearly unanimously judged a flop, with some fans referring to the story only as "That [expletive deleted] Tabloid." The gist of the story is that the Time Trapper had changed history, making Earth into a world constantly torn by war, so that he could rule all the dimensions. Just why he needs to change the Earth's history to rule all dimensions isn't explained, unfortunately. The wedding scene takes place in the first few pages of the first chapter, and after that it is mentioned only in passing. Mike Grell obviously was influenced by Dave Cockrum's depiction of the wedding of Bouncing Boy and Duo Damsel (in ***S/LSH #200***) when he drew the scene, as he included himself and Paul Levitz in the scene. It was, however, much less subtle than Cockrum's staging, as both Levitz and Grell were in the foreground and staring out at the reader instead of watching the wedding, as Cockrum's characters were. Saturn Girl can only fit one leg inside her tubular wedding gown, so the other one vanished mysteriously, etc. Most fans decided that it wasn't worth the effort to rationalize the story, and put it on a parallel world, with "our" Lightning Lad and Saturn Girl having been married in between issues of the regular comic.

In issue #237, Walt Simonson filled in on the pencilling chores in another full-length story. ***"The Price Too High"*** starts as R. J. Brande, the Legion's founder, hosts a going-away party for Saturn Girl and Lightning Lad—who, now that they are married, cannot remain in the singles-only Legion.

Suddenly, a man in a green costume pops up and takes Brande and a few Legionnaires hostage, shouting that he demands revenge. The villain—with the silly name of Arma Getten—states that he could indeed blow everyone to bits, which Brainiac 5 confirms. He then commands the Legionnaires to run various errands for him, ostensibly to bring him the riches denied his family when Brande's company drove Getten's father out of

business.

Sun Boy, Mon-El, Downstar, and Superboy, go after the star at which Mon-El had defeated the Khunds in the previous issue, to procure for Getten the core of the star. Of course, that is the experiment the United Planets is conducting there, and the Khunds are stil there as well, trying to get the star core. Mon-El and Superboy defeat the Khunds by each picking up a corner of their spaceship and flinging it away.

After various other groupings of Legionnaires complete their various missions, all but the hostages return to the asteroid to decide on the best course through which to bamboozle Getten. In their absence, however, Star Boy, one of the hostages, has made one side of the asteroid heavier than the other. The returning Legionnaires detect this and realize that something is going on. Getten reminds them that he could kill Brande with his energy bubble, and the Legionnaires retreat—but Brande takes down Getten in a flying tackle. The buble explodes, and it turns out that—Brainiac 5's verification notwithstanding—Getten has lied. Getten eventually decides then that if the Legion isn't going to let him play the game his way, they can't use his bat, and pulls himself to atoms.

Is it any wonder that some people don't understand why the Legion has such a fandom?

Levitz's next story was a dialogue job over a Jim Starlin plot. Ultra Boy returns to his home world, Rimbor, to visit a former lover in a seedy hotel. Suddenly, the former lover is dead, and Ultra Boy is the only suspect. The Most Obvious Suspect is Marla, the Legion's "adult advisor," who claims that United Planets factions already dislike the Legion and that one of their members being a murderer would only add fuel to the fire. The Butler turns out to be Wildfire—or, more accurately, a Wildfire robot. The story leaves no doubt that the person who framed Ultra Boy was a Legionnaire.

This was the first story in some time that fans praised both for story and art. The story featured strong continuity with older stories, and emphasized Chameleon Boy in his role as leader of the Legion Espionage Squad (while the Squad itself was uninvolved, Chameleon Boy used Squad techniques to prove Ultra Boy's innocence). The pacing of the 34-page story was fairly good, with the story dragging only when characters stood around and argued about Ultra Boy's guilt.

In issue #240, Levitz plotted a story which Jack C. Harris dialogued, ***"The Man Who Menaced the Legion."*** This featured the return of Grimbor, the chainsman who, along with his girlfriend Charma, had been defeated by the Legion a couple of years earlier. Charma had had the power to drive men mad with lust and women mad with hatred. The Legion women defeated her, and of course Charma was killed in prison. Grimbor blames the Legion for Charma's untimely demise.

By kidnapping the President and holding him prisoner, Grimbor attracts the Legion to his hide-out, where he binds them with special

DON'T LET ANYTHING SLOW YOU DOWN! THE SOONER WE GET TO HEGER'S WORLD, THE BETTER OUR CHANCES FOR PEACE.
THE UNITED PLANETS SAID OUR PRESENCE IS VITAL!
BUT EVEN AS WILDFIRE SPEAKS, HIS URGENT HASTE TO AVOID ONE DISASTER IS CAUSING ANOTHER— AS A SCIENCE POLICE AIRCAR MANEUVERS HURRIEDLY TO GET OUT OF HIS WAY—
—OVERLOADING AN ALREADY-STRAINED ENGINE, AND CAUSING AN EXPLOSION!
KABLOOM
WILDFIRE!
NO GOOD— HE'S ALREADY IN THE STRATOSPHERE—
—IT'S UP TO ME!
I WISH THAT BLUSTERING BAG OF ENERGY WOULD WATCH WHAT HE'S DOING!
© 1981 DC Comics

James Sherman's inventive layouts and use of perspective helped elevate the *"Earthwar Saga"* to a high position among *"Legion"* stories.

chains that defeat their individual powers. They escape (Phantom Girl's chains only held her when she was in her phantom form—she becomes solid and frees the others), track down Grimbor, and free the President.

The story was a good one—not spectacular, but better than could be expected of a tale with Grimbor in a major role. Although it was somewhat similar to ***"No Price Too High,"*** with the President substituting for Brande and the errands removed, there were interesting bits of 30th-century life added for atmosphere (such as a trans-Atlantic bridge). It was refreshing to see the Legionnaires working on something relatively mundane after so many "cosmic" tales.

"Dawnstar Rising," the origin of the newest Legionnaire, was the back-feature in that issue. It was as insubstantial as most origin stories are, with the origin taking up so much room that there was little left for a plot. Jim Sherman got—and took—his chance to create many visually wonderful types of aliens and robots, but the story itself would not have

BUT, LIGHT YEARS DISTANT...
FASCINATING! HMPH! THEY HAVE ACTUALLY RENDERED THE WARLORD USELESS!
THESE LEGIONNAIRES CONSISTENTLY PROVE MORE RESOURCEFUL THAN WE HAVE IMAGINED!
WE MUST CONSIDER WHETHER WE HAVE UNDERESTIMATED THEM IN OUR OVERWHELMING DESIRE TO CONQUER EARTH!

The Dominators, from the *"Earthwar Saga."* ©1981 DC Comics

been missed had DC decided not to print it.

This was emphatically not true of the next story, though, as many of the hints and dangling plot-threads which Levitz had been dropping for the previous year-and-a-half culminated in **"Earthwar."**

As part one, **"Prologue to Earthwar,"** begins in #241, Wildfire, Dawnstar, Ultra Boy, and Mon-El are flying off from Legion headquarters. Explanatory dialogue gives the reader the necessary information immediately: the threat of war has caused the U.P. to ask the Legion to go to Weber's World, where the Dominators are visiting to negotiate. On another front, an alert from space informs another group of Legionnaires that the Resource Raiders have struck again. Superboy, Sun Boy, Element Lad, and a few others defeat them easily.

When the initial group of Legionnaires reach Weber's World (an artificial world created for civil servants and diplomats) they re-encounter Ambassador Relnic, who explains that the Legionnaires are there as security guards, so that the negotiations between the U.P. and the Dominators can be carried out in safety. The scene then switches back to Earth. Antarctica is being invaded as the Resource Raiders' attempt to steal rare-earth metals. Chameleon Boy manages to sneak aboard the Raiders' ship, but is discovered.

Back on Weber's World, the Legionnaires have just saved a group of citizens from a bomb. Suspicion is cast on Ontiir, security chief for Weber's World, and on Relnic, as possible saboteurs.

Superboy, meanwhile, rescues Chameleon Boy from the Raiders' leader, and the other Legionnaires arrive as reinforcements. Brainiac 5 investigates and discovers that the Resource Raiders "weren't just an unusual group of criminals—they're actually the ***advance guard*** of an ***invasion—the Khunds*** are about to attack Earth—in order to ***destroy*** it totally!"

Continued next month.

After thirty days' wait, we find that the people on Weber's World have just heard that war has broken out on Earth—but it is not the Dominators attacking the seat of the U.P. It is the Khunds. The Legionnaires on Earth know this all too well. Element Lad takes the initiative to bring the war back to the Khunds' world, in the meantime dispatching Brainiac 5 to Weber's World to solicit help.

Unfortunately, E-Lad's plan is inconclusive, as it is revealed that the Khund warlord is really a telepathically-controlled drone. The Legionnaires track the signals that controlled the warlord and discover that the signals' source is somewhere on Weber's World.

Continued next month.

At this point, Levitz had managed to build a plot that was intricate, building not one but many levels which all affected each other. As the diplomats attempted to avoid war against one faction, another faction declared war—only to be revealed as an advance guard for another faction. And ***that*** faction appeared to be centered on the world where the diplomats were meeting.

Levitz admitted that the series was influenced somewhat by the **"Lensman"** series (by E.E. "Doc" Smith), primarily in the structure of the plot. The complicated structure was a risk, but it appeared to be paying off. Levitz was borrowing elements from **"Legion"** stories that had appeared a decade-and-a-half ago, seeding his own stories with these elements for over a year, and bringing it all to a grandiose climax.

It is also appropriate at this point to mention Jim Sherman's artwork on the first two parts of the **"Earthwar"** series. It seems safe to say that the art on these two stories is the standard which current and future artists will have to meet. Sherman went out of his way to design the stories carefully, using everything from costumes to architecture to help set the proper mood and tell the story. He was careful to ensure that characters' expressions matched what they were saying and feeling. The layout was a bit confusing in one or two spots, but with a tale this complex, it was a necessary evil.

The back features in both of these issues were plotted by Levitz and written by Paul Kupperberg, pencilled by Arvell Jones, and inked by Danny Bulanadi. **"My Brother's Keeper,"** in #241, explained that Timber Wolf and Light Lass were not involved in the proceedings because they were on Winath (the home world of both Lightning Lad and Light Lass) tracking down Lightning Lord. **"Girls' Night Out"** in the next issue explained that Princess Projectra, Shadow Lass, Dream Girl, and Light Lass (again) were uninvolved because they took the night off to go to dinner. Right... (Actually, in the letter column in #247, Levitz explained that the lead-to-back feature correlation had gotten scrambled when the **"Earthwar"** series had been pushed back several months due to deadlines.)

In **"Earth's Last Stand"** in #243, the Legionnaires who had defeated the Khunds in #242 finally arrived at Weber's World and exchanged information with those acting as security there.

Meanwhile, those Legionnaires still on Earth had taken an active part in fending off the Khund attack, but they are quickly defeated. Then we cut to Brainiac 5, who has just arrived at Weber's World. He was in touch with Wildfire long enough to be informed that Earth was in dire trouble—and then was swallowed by a space warp.

The conference between Relnic and the Dominators finally started, and the Legionnaires tracked the Khunds' hyper-beam to the conference room they are using. The Legion broke into that room, only to find it empty.

Back on Earth, the Substitute Legion made an appearance to help fight the Khunds, but they fall quickly. Finally, the only Legionnaires who were on Earth were the four former mem-

bers, Bouncing Boy, Duo Damsel, Lightning Lad, and Saturn Girl.

The next month, **"The Circle That Crushed the Earth"** opened with all the Legionnaires still in space returning to Earth to fight in the war there. Exactly halfway between Weber's World and Earth, they discover a new space station, containing the Dominators. In the second chapter, the four former Legionnaires are joined by a Science Police officer and Karate Kid (returning from the 20th century). In chapter three, Colossal Boy, Ultra Boy, Wildfire, Dawnstar, Superboy, Mon-El, Sun Boy, and Element Lad finally reach the Lords of the Dark Circle, only to find that the rest of the Legion and the reservists are being held prisoner. After a final attack, Lightning Lad and Saturn Girl show up (Bouncing Boy and Duo Damsel having been knocked out by a concussion bomb) and those assembled members discover that their opponent is really Mordru, an immensely powerful sorcerer who is probably the Legion's single most formidable foe.

"Mordru, Master of Earth" has the Legionnaires escaping from Mordru at its outset. Only Superboy, Lightning Lad, Saturn Girl, and Karate Kid remain free. After a short breather to plan strategy (during which Mordru demonstrates his powers for the reader), the Legionnaires attack directly. Instead of fighting, however, they scoop up the other Legionnaires and head out into outer space. Of course, Mordru follows, and he is weakened by being in airless space. When Element Lad seals Mordru in a globe of "special soil," he, and the Dark Circle, are defeated. (This was one of Levitz's few continuity flaws. Mordru's weakness is not any "special soil." It is simply lack of air. The fight should have been over a page earlier.)

In the epilogue, the Legion's constitution is amended to allow married members. Bouncing Boy and Duo Damsel refuse the honor, but Lightning Lad and Saturn Girl eagerly rejoin. The thousand-year galactic treaty is announced, and the rest of the story's loose ends are tied up.

The major flaw of the series is that we are never really shown the effect that the war has had on Earth. We are told in captions that the planet has been devastated, but without visuals it is hard to imagine the scale of destruction. For the next year or so, fairly constant reference is made to the rebuilding of the planet, and the readers are shown bits and pieces of this rebuilding, but it should have been shown during the war itself to give it a frame of reference.

Other than that, though, the series deserved the term "epic." The structure was complex, and the heroes were fighting for the defense of a world, with the entire galaxy in danger. With the **"Earthwar"** series, Levitz gave **"Legion"** fans a lasting contribution, one that *can* be pointed to when people ask, "Why are you a *'Legion'* fan?"

His timing was fortunate, too, for at that point he left the writing of the book. Time pressure and increased responsibilities on DC's business end forced him away from any regular assignment for a while. He did manage a few more fill-in and special stories, however.

The first was in #246, directly after the end of the **"Earthwar"** series. Over Paul Levitz's plot, Len Wein scripted **"Will the Last One to Leave Mercury Please Close the Planet?"** The plot was rather superficial. Iris Jacobs (Karate Kid's 20th-century girlfriend from his own series) was taken by K.K. to Mercury to be changed back to her human form (from the diamond form in which she was trapped at the close of the **KARATE KID** series). Some Legionnaires followed, and after K.K. and Iris left, those who remained (Cosmic Boy, Shadow Lass, Chameleon Boy, Lightning Lad, and Sun Boy) were invited to solve a locked-room mystery: Patients had been vanishing from the Mercury hospital. Save for the hospital, the planet was an inferno, so the patients *could not* have left the building. Where did they go?

This was something new for the **"Legion"** series—a locked-room mystery (in a science-fiction setting), and it was quite welcome as such.

After a suitably comic-y unfolding of the plot, the secret is revealed: The planet is populated by **"heat beings**—sentient balls of *agitated molecules!"* Whenever one of these so-called Thermoids passed through a patient's body, the patient was inadvertently disintegrated by the **"overwhelming temperatures."** Why the Thermoids didn't disintegrate the building's walls as they entered is not explained.

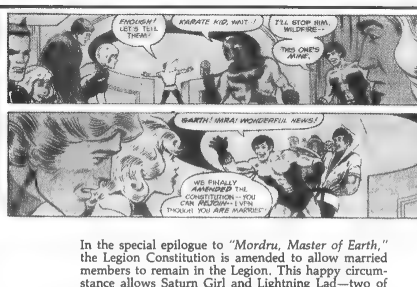
The very basic idea—that there are life-forms in the universe that humanoids cannot perceive or even detect through normal means—was a good one. Sadly, the plot holes of the presentation of this concept dwarf the Lincoln Tunnel. Besides the abovementioned non-disintegrating walls, there is the question of how the Thermoids took the Legionnaires away from the solar valley and rescued them. All but Sun Boy were unconscious on page 13, but at the top of the next page, everyone except Shadow Lass is just fine. Simply put, the execution killed the story.

"Celebration" in #247 was the story in which the year's Legion Leader was chosen. It was ostensibly an "anniversary" story because the Legion of Super-Heroes first appeared in **ADVENTURE #247**, and also, according to Levitz's reckoning, **"Celebration"** was the feature's 247th story (not counting cameos). The surprise ending—Lightning Lad winning the election—was rather spoiled for some readers by Levitz's announcement of the winner in the letters page just **before** the story. During the course of the story, Superboy flitted around and played tricks on the Legionnaires, since—within the context of the story—he was celebrating **his** anniversary with the Legion. An insubstantial but harmless tale.

Jim Starlin returned to provide the plot and layouts for issues #250-1, tying up the loose ends from #237 in a piece originally planned for a **LEGION SPECTACULAR**. (Starlin used the pseudonym "Steve Apollo" in the credits, but for those few who couldn't detect Starlin's layouts, DC obligingly mentioned Starlin in the letter column.)

As the story began, Chameleon Boy was waiting for Wildfire to show up, so he could deliver evidence to the then-Leader. Cham is surprised by the hooded villain who had killed the woman from Ultra Boy's past in #237. Of course, the hooded villain only knocks Cham out, so when Wildfire finds him hours later, the evidence is still in Chameleon Boy's flight ring.

Wildfire calls a general meeting and discloses that the only evidence he found stated that the villain was a Legionnaire. The hooded villain chooses that convenient point to make a holographic appearance (although all he does is gloat). Within a couple of sec-


ENOUGH! LET'S TELL THEM!
KARATE KID, WAIT!
I'LL STOP HIM, WILDFIRE!
THIS ONE'S MINE.
1981 DC Comics
EARTH! IMRA! WONDERFUL NEWS!
WE FINALLY AMENDED THE CONSTITUTION - YOU CAN RESIGN--I MEAN THOUGH! YOU ARE MARRIED!
21

In the special epilogue to *"Mordru, Master of Earth,"* the Legion Constitution is amended to allow married members to remain in the Legion. This happy circumstance allows Saturn Girl and Lightning Lad—two of the group's charter members—to rejoin.

PERHAPS... BUT IT WAS THAT URGENT! SURELY THE S.P. CHIEF WOULDN'T HAVE SENT A PATROL OFFICER TO DELIVER IT, PHANTOM GIRL.
SO I ONLY ACTED LOGICALLY, ELEMENT LAD... AND I'M SORRY IF I OVER-STEPPED YOU.
NO PROBLEM, BRAINY... JUST DO ME A FAVOR.
NEXT TIME WE ELECT A TEAM LEADER, CAMPAIGN HARDER THAT WAY MAYBE YOU CAN HAVE THE AUTHORITY YOU WANT--
--AND THE RESPONSIBILITY THAT GOES WITH IT?
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5

Brainiac 5's trouble with leadership begins in small scenes like this. He feels the burden, but gets none of the power, and eventually goes mad.

onds, the "Deep Space Alarm" starts blasting. When Superboy checks, sure enough, millions of light-years away, there's hate incarnate, in the person of Omega (a creature who has decided that it hates the Legion more than anything else and is going to give them the proverbial one-two).

To make a long story short, the hooded figure (revealed as Brainiac 5) doesn't like the Legionnaires any more, because they don't let him go on vacation, and so when he catches a rare disease, it intensifies his feelings into insanity.

Honest.

The Legionnaires realize that they need the Miracle Machine to get out of this one. In the meantime, Omega reaches Legion headquarters; Princess Projectra creates an illusion of a second Omega so that the two can fight and buy time, but that doesn't work. Wildfire opens his faceplate and unleashes his energy at Omega. That just blows up the clubhouse.

Finally, Omega encounters Brainiac 5, who tells Omega that any second now, he's going to die, because even as they speak, the Miracle Machine is being destroyed. Sure enough, Omega fades into nothingness in a final burst of light. How did it happen?

Matter-Eater Lad ate the Miracle Machine.

Honest.

Of course, now Matter-Eater Lad has gone 'round the bend as well, so he and Brainiac 5 were taken to their friendly local Psychomedic, and the story closes with Superboy and Wildfire sitting on what would be the front steps of the HQ (if it still stood), talking about the ramifications of the case. These two pages were the best of the lot, portraying the quiet reflection that people do when their lives have been changed with uncertain effect.

One plot hole jumps up and down, waving its hand: Why didn't the Legionnaires just project Omega into the Phantom Zone? They *did* try zapping Omega into another dimension, but Omega just slapped the dimensional bomb aside. But with the Phantom Zone plan, all the Legion would have to do would be to aim the Zone ray projector at Omega for a couple of seconds. The story could still have been just as long, and probably more dramatic without the silliness of having Matter-Eater Lad eat the Miracle Miracle. (Some critics have noted that the Legion could simply have used the Miracle Machine to destroy itself.)

To be fair, the plot holes were not Levitz's fault, and his script was good, with the occasional exception (when Wildfire faces down Omega, there's a schlocky caption about how the Legionnaire "has *given up* the right to be called *man*...and earned the name *Wildfire!*")

Levitz's last **"Legion"** story to date was in the ***SUPER-STAR HOLIDAY SPECIAL*** released in late 1979. As may be inferred from the title, it was DC's annual Christmas package. In the **"Legion"** story, ***"Star Light, Star Bright—Farthest Star I See Tonight,"*** the Legionnaires who seemingly have nothing better to do on Christmas Eve go looking for the Star of Bethlehem. This brings them to a lonely little planet which is undergoing the beginning of an ice age. (Since there is no sun in the area, one wonders why it wasn't barren long ago.) The Legionnaires get the three intelligent species on the planet (who were all previously incapable of communicating with one another) to work together, thanks to standard Legionnaire telepathic plugs. This will allow them to live together and protect each other until they can be evacuated.

It was not a bad story; at least, it had the sentimentality one accepts in Christmas stories. And there were some nice bits of Legionnaire business, such as showing the way different members from different countries or planets celebrated the holiday. But it was not particularly memorable otherwise. Had it been a back-up in an issue of ***SUPERBOY AND THE LEGION***, it would have been forgotten.

Fortunately, thanks to the ***"Earthwar"*** series and a few other less spectacular bits and pieces, the rest of Levitz's first tenure on ***"The Legion"*** was memorable. His achievements in his post, more formative, tenure on the series comprise one of the high points in ***"The Legion's"*** long history, and through them, we readers can project a good deal of optimism towards ***THE LEGION OF SUPER-HEROES*** in the coming months.

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SUPER-TEAM SPIRIT

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by Murray R. Ward

In our group-by-group examination of the super-hero teams in comics, we now come to what is surely one of the most unique team series of all: ***THE LEGION OF SUPER-HEROES***, published by DC Comics.

The Legion, or LSH for short, is the owner of a strange and almost unbelievable history, even as compared with the publishing sagas of its fellow super-groups. It began as a minor spin-off from the "**Superman**" legend, yet for years it headlined a monthly comic while the Man of Steel, in his own magazine, was appearing a mere eight times a year. It stands as the only super-team series to have appeared as the main feature in *two* different titles, *none* of which bore the name of the group. It bears the distinction of having been scripted by Superman's creator, a top science fiction author, and the present editor-in-chief of Marvel Comics, all in its initial run alone. And yes, in explanation of that phrase "initial run," it was condemned to a slow and painful death at the height of its popularity by a conjuring trick of editorial reshuffling, only to rise, phoenix-like, to a revival prompted by comics' answer to the ***STAR TREK*** fans whose write-in campaign saved that TV show from cancellation in the late 1960s.

The Legion of Super-Heroes bears more than one similarity to ***STAR TREK***. Not only are some of its most avid admirers hardly old enough to remember ***ADVENTURE COMICS #300*** (the start of the regular series) as anything but a rare historical document, akin to, say, the Dead Sea Scrolls (much as the ***STAR TREK*** revivalists are, to a great extent, fans too young to have seen the series itself), but like ***STAR TREK***, it takes place in the far future. Chronologically speaking, then, although the team has been appearing in comics, off and on, for over two decades, most of its members will not be born for a millenium.

A long-time distinction of the group is its tradition of being the most populous (some say over-populated) team in comics. A story published in 1970 limited (?) the roster of the organization to 25 full-time members, which means that, counting those who have resigned, been expelled, or been killed in action, to say nothing of the numerous hangers-on, some of whom have formed their own Legion-aligned groups, there are well over 30 heroes and heroines who could claim to be Legionnaires.

One of the advantages of a group with so many members, and another one of the Legion's points of uniqueness, is that the traditonal one-girl-to-a-group rule of the 1960s super-teams has never applied to the Legion. An even dozen females have belonged to the LSH, the Legion of Substitute Heroes, and the Legion Reserve, which is not only more members than make up the average super-team, but is also a convenient number for some enterprising soul wishing to create a convenient Legion of Super-Heroines pin-up calendar.

But let us see how the Legion came to this unique position in comics:

I. ORIGINS

In the late 1950s, the phrase "Superman Family" referred not, as it does today, to a single comic title, but to an actual family of magazines featuring the Big Red S. Superman starred in his own title, was covered featured in ***ACTION COMICS*** where his back-up was Supergirl, teamed up with Batman in ***WORLD'S FINEST COMICS***, and appeared regularly in the exploits of his pal (in ***JIMMY OLSEN***), his girl friend (in ***LOIS LANE***), and his younger self (in ***SUPERBOY***), in addition to being a member of the ***JUSTICE LEAGUE OF AMERICA***. He also appeared (or rather Superboy did) in one more comic: ***ADVENTURE***. Superboy was the headliner in that book, just as his adult self was in ***ACTION***, and was supported in the back pages by such second-string future JLAers as Green Arrow and Aquaman. The Ace Archer and the Sea King were pulling a lot of extra duty, though, since they filled the second and third spots in other titles of the "Superman Family" line as well, so editor Mort Weisinger attempted to give them some breathing space by substituting new features, more closely allied to the Superboy/Superman mythos.

One of these was "***Tales of the Bizarro World***," featuring the ***MAD*** magazine-like exploits of Superman's pathetic imperfect double on his square-shaped homeworld. This series' two main claims to fame seem to be that it provided Superman writers with a repository for any baby-talk left over from Superboy stories (a typical line of Bizarro dialogue was "Alarm clock ring! Time me go to bed!"), and that it first turned fan-cartoonist Fred Hembeck on to comics.

While the Bizarros were attending the School of Hard Knocks, a trio of colorfully-clad youths (never clad in quite the *same* colors for two stories in a row, true, but colorfully-clad, nonetheless) were turning up irregularly as guest-stars in the Superboy lead stories in ***ADVENTURE***. These were Saturn Girl, so-called because of her birth on that planet (actually one of its moons, as later amended) and possessor of telepathic powers: Lightning Lad, originally called Lightning Boy, named because he could project bolts of elec-

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Extra! A GREAT SUPERBABY STORY!
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COMICS
AUG
SUPERBOY
SHRINKING VIOLET
COSMIC BOY
SATURN GIRL
BOUNCING BOY
AS LEADER OF THE LEGION OF SUBSTITUTE HEROES, I, POLAR BOY, ACCUSE THESE SUPER-HEROES OF PLOTTING TO CONQUER THE EARTH I VOTE WE BATTLE THEM TO A STANDSTILL
Sensational! The LEGION of SUBSTITUTE HEROES Declares WAR on The LEGION of SUPER-HEROES

A Legion extravaganza cover. ...since Superboy was a member of their team, any Legion cover usually featured him as well."

tricity; and Cosmic Boy, whose power was that of magnetism and who thus had no reason for being called Cosmic Boy rather than, say, Magnetic Kid. These three were charter members of the Legion of Super-Heroes, a club of adolescents in the 30th century A.D., each of whose members had one or more super-powers and who used them in the Superboy/Superman tradition to right wrongs and avert natural disasters in their era. They first turned up in ***ADVENTURE* #247** to recruit the Boy of Steel as a member, despite his being separated from them by a thousand years of intervening history. This proved no barrier to the characters involved, however, since the Legion had the capacity to travel in time using transparent globes called "Time-Bubbles," and of course, as any fan of the Superman movie knows, Kal-El can break the time barrier at will.

Superboy might have at first imagined the Legion to be hard-up for members to have to travel so far afield for new pledges, but if so, he rapidly learned such was not the case. Over the next few years, the Legionnaires turned up in one ***"Superboy"*** story after another, and in other ***"Superman Family"*** books as well, and with each appearance, they had a few more members. (All of this is even today very confusing to the loyal Legion follower, who has no such clear idea of which members joined up when, and in what order, as he does when reading such titles as the ***JUSTICE LEAGUE*** or the ***AVENGERS***. Even the list given in the recent ***SECRETS OF THE LEGION OF SUPER-HEROES* #1** is not the final authority, as it omits at least four prominent later members, to say nothing of contradicting the order in which earlier members are said to have joined in the accompanying story. The author hopes the list which concludes this article is free from such errors, and if not, would appreciate having any such mistakes pointed out by readers.) By the time ***ADVENTURE*** reached its 300th issue, two things had happened: the Legion now had some 16 members, including not only Superboy, but also his later-20th-century-dwelling cousin, Supergirl; and the Bizarros' feature was dropped in favor of a new series, ***"Tales of the Legion of Super-Heroes."***

Editor Weisinger's decision to go with the Legion in ***ADVENTURE*** appears to have been a popular one. Their story rapidly moved from the magazine's back pages to the front of the book; their page count grew till they and Superboy pushed all other contenders out of the comic; and they took the cover spot more often than not (although, they had a natural advantage in that, since Superboy was a member of their team, any Legion cover usually featured him as well). The logo changed to read ***ADVENTURE COMICS FEATURING SUPERBOY AND THE LEGION OF SUPER-HEROES***; Superboy's series changed to a selection of reprints, then disappeared altogether; and the Legion took over ***ADVENTURE*** as, to all intents and purposes, their own book, in the mid-1960s.

That was the Legion's origin from a publishing standpoint. Within the comic-book universe of Earth-One, or the alternate future thereof in which the **"LSH"** stories take place the team's origins remained shrouded in mystery for many years, despite the fact that in almost every issue a caption or a bit of uninspired but necessary dialogue would remind us that the Legion was a club for young super-heroes (and the first to use the term "super-heroes," by the way) based on Earth in the future. It was not until ***SUPERBOY* #147**, which under the peculiar numbering system of the time was also ***80 PAGE GIANT #47***, a reprint giant published only a year before the end of the Legion's ***ADVENTURE*** run, that a new story was commissioned (a first for DC's giants) which told how the organization started. R.J. Brande, a billionaire entrepreneur, was saved from an assassination attempt by the combined efforts of the trio of charter Legionnaires. The future Saturn Girl read the minds of the assailants and disclosed their intentions, while the magnetism and lightning bolts of the two boys disarmed them. This incident inspired Brande to bankroll an elite corps of super-powered youths who would become the Legion, and the rest, as they say, was history...

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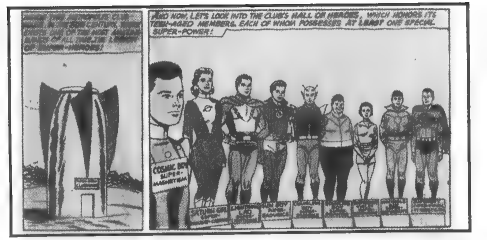
II. ORGANIZATION

In its early days, the Legion is repeatedly described as a club, rather than an organization or a team. Its status as such is reflected in its methods of operation. The Legion headquarters for years was a building whose visible outer appearance was that of an inverted rocketship, known as the Legion Clubhouse. Even then, the scope of the group's operations and the sheer numbers of its membership made a larger building necessary, and the bulk of Legion HQ was hidden in sub-basements below-ground. Later, when the original clubhouse was badly damaged in an attack on Earth by the Fatal Five, a new, larger central base was built, resembling a small university campus more than a one-room schoolhouse.

Legion meetings, even more so than those

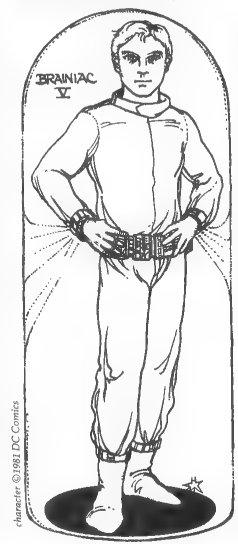
of DC's other highly-formal super-teams (such as the JLA and JSA) proceeded according to a futuristic version of Roberts' Rules of Order. From the outset, the group was governed by the by-laws set down in a strictly-enforced Legion Constitution, and this document was constantly being revised as the heroes gained more experience in their duties. One must remember, after all, that unlike the adult super-doers of other teams, the Legionnaires were all teen-agers, the charter members were about 14 when the club was formed, and so were in greater need of restriction than a group of seasoned full-grown crimefighters. The Legion, it should be pointed out, is neither strictly a common-origin super-team, since its members do not owe their powers to a single source or incident, nor a formulated super-team, since none of the members except Superboy and Supergirl were active as independent heroes before joining. They are of the third type of group discussed in our opening installment—the hybrid team, neither completely of one type nor the other.


AND NOW, LET'S LOOK INTO THE CLUB'S HALL OF HEROES, WHICH HONORS ITS TEEN-AGED MEMBERS, EACH OF WHOM POSSESSES AT LEAST ONE SPECIAL SUPER-POWER!
COSMIC BOY MASTER MAGNETISM
WILDFIRE

Mon-El, and Wildfire. Most recently, Lightning Lad, the only original member never to have held office, led the group. (It should be noted that the runner-up in the reader-elections was made deputy leader, an office awarded to Element Lad most often of those who have never been leader, and that Phantom Girl consistently placed highest in votes among the female members in the write-ins.)

Unlike much of the rest of the "Superman Family" cosmos, the Legion, perhaps by virtue of its isolation from other feaures by being set in the far future, was able to change and grow with the passage of time while other strips were locked-in to established patterns (i.e. Superman never marrying Lois Lane, or finding an antidote for Kryptonite, or gaining a different power, etc.). As the group's roster expanded, and their HQ grew, a sense of team history developed, along with a kind of progress that was in keeping with the science fiction/space opera theme necessary to a series which took place in the 30th century. Where other super-teams usually boasted a single member with the power of flight, the Legionnaires found it necessary for all members to be able to fly without the aid of aircraft, and so was created the Legion flying-belt. This in time gave way to the more compact Legion Flight Ring, powered by an anti-gravity element. Telepathic ear-plugs facilitated communication between alien species, a fundamental requirement of a group which regularly traveled to distant planets and indeed, whose members hailed from worlds all over the known universe.

Yet another element of change was the Legion leadership. Cosmic Boy was the leader of the original trio, but another "first" happened when he was succeeded by Saturn Girl, the only female ever to head a super-team until Black Widow led the Champions in the 1970s and Storm temporarily commanded the X-Men in the 1980s. So competent a commander did she prove to be that she was elected to a second term, the only Legion leader to be so honored for years to come. One of the more neglected members, Invisible Kid, surprised readers by becoming the third leader, a move roughly equal to making the Elongated Man the boss of the Justice League. Thereafter, readers were invited to participate in the elections with write-in votes, which resulted in the successful candidacies of Ultra Boy, Karate Kid,



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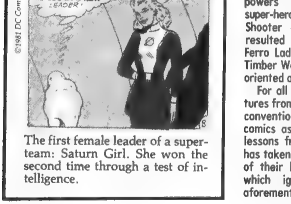
Under its various creative staffs, the most prominent writers during the 1960s being Jerry Siegel, Edmond Hamilton, and Jim Shooter, and the main artists of the period including John Forte, Curt Swan, Sheldon Moldoff, and Win Mortimer, the Legion experienced change in its storylines as well, and in the lives of its members. Where other comics stories had perpetual happy endings, especially those in the Weisinger "**Superman**" line, Legion members could experience tragedy. In one of the earliest adventures, Lightning Lad was killed in action, the first member of any super-team to die. A later story revived him, but at the cost of the life of Chameleon Boy's alien pet, Proty. Still later, the reborn Lightning Lad lost an arm in combat and had it replaced with a robot prosthetic. Again, his tragedy had a happy denouement, when he was granted a new human arm in a still later tale—but all the members were not so fortunate. Ferro Lad perished to destroy the monstrous Sun-Eater; Invisible Kid died in battle with Validus of the Fatal Five; and Chemical King gave his life to prevent a world war.

Perhaps the most famous Legion story, or the most infamous, is the "***Adult Legion***" story of ***ADVENTURE #354-355***, in which the "present-day" Superman travels into the later portion of the 30th century and visits the Legionnaires as adults. More changes and tragedies are revealed here, as well as some happier moments. Most of the Legion romances established earlier in the series (with that many girls in the group, all of them stunning, and dressed in either very clinging or very revealing costumes, romances were a foregone conclusion) resulted in marriages, and in some cases, children with their parents' powers. However, still more members are fated to die; some of them have yet to be introduced in the "mainstream" of the series. The personal histories of several members are, in retrospect, less than joyous: Brainiac 5's infatuation with Supergirl (surely a contributing cause to his mental collapse in a series of late 1970s stories) appears doomed to despair; likewise unrequited is Colossal Boy's long-carried torch for Shrinking Violet, which will destine him for bachelorhood while she marries Duplicate Boy; while Mon-El, after

spending 1000 years trapped in the intangible realm of the Phantom Zone, will see his beloved Shadow Lass killed, and leave the Legion to become a lone space explorer. (Contrary to popular fan belief, the ***"Adult Legion"*** story, if it is not relegated to the status of "possible alternative future" in an upcoming issue, does not serve to limit the possibilities, dramatic or otherwise, of the entire Legion. Several of the more interesting members do not appear in that story, including Sun Boy, Karate Kid, Princess Projectra, and Chameleon Boy, and thus their futures are not defined, to say nothing of all the members who have joined since the fateful tale was published, whose names were not mentioned among the honored dead.)

Yet another point of Legion uniqueness, and an important part of their organization, is the "division of power" aspect of the group. The usual super-team will have one of two kinds of power structures. The common-origin team, such as the Fantastic Four, will usually have members whose abilities complement each other, resulting in exciting teamwork: one member can fly, another has super-strength, etc. The formulated team, composed as it is of already-extant heroes not deliberately designed to work in tandem, may be a bit more awkward, with seemingly all-powerful champions fighting side-by-side with costumed crusaders better suited to combatting street crime than alien invaders, *e.g.* Superman *vis-a-vis* Green Arrow in the JLA, or Thor and the Wasp as fellow Avengers. Another common problem, especially in formulated teams that later expand to include members who don't have their own series outside the team strip, is that of "popular" members versus "less popular" members—again, the JLA and the Avengers are the obvious examples—in which the readers are divided into two camps, those who want to see the big names in action, and those who want the less-exposed heroes to shine.

The Legion of Super-Heroes neatly sidestepped some of these difficulties, while creating others. Since, by Legion rules, no hero member may have a power already possessed by another member, teamwork is practically


RIGHT, BECAUSE OF YOUR CLEVERNESS IN FIGURING OUT THE SOLUTION TO THE "GREAT PUNY PUZZLE", YOU ARE NOW OFFICIALLY THE LEGION'S NEW LEADER!
I AM HONORED! IT IS AWFULLY HARD! OR YOU TO CREATE THE PUZZLE, PUNY!
©1983 DC Comics

The first female leader of a super-team: Saturn Girl. She won the second time through a test of intelligence.

TRYING TO HELP YOU LOVE WATCH ME! I'M WIRING THIS BASKET OF ONE FRUIT SO MUCH AS WIGGLES THE SLIGHT GRENADE
A SUPPOSITORY OF FELT EXPLODES!
YOU'LL SAG AND DIE
A "solo story" Legion exploit from ACTION COMICS.
WHA—PLAGUE!
OH HEARD ME, LOVE? I WON'T TRY TO STOP YOU ANYMORE! TOUCH IT, THEN SEE HOW YOU MUNCH IT— BIT BY BIT! YOU'LL SAG AND DIE!
©1983 DC Comics

de rigeur, especially among those members whose powers are not of the physically overwhelming variety. Also, since another rule states that all powers must be "natural," that is, not dependent on any mechanical device, and still another by-law states that all members must have actual powers, not just skills, many of the "weaker" heroes who inhabit the other super-groups would be ineligible for Legion duty. (Archers like Green Arrow and Hawkeye, for example, would be out, as would heroes who depend on gimmicks, such as the Atom and Hawkman, and non-powered crusaders like Batman, Robin, and the Black Panther. Admittedly, some cases are open to discussion: if Karate Kid's martial arts count as a power, what about someone with the fighting skills of a Captain America? And are androids or robots of the sentience level of the Vision, Jocasta, and the Red Tornado considered ineligible, since their powers might be called mechanical?) The main troubles afflicting the Legion would seem to be the presence of a few world-beating heroes (especially Superboy, Mon-El, and to a lesser extent Element Lad and Ultra Boy) who can easily accomplish the feats of a number of their colleagues, and on the other hand, a large proportion of what have been called "strike-a-pose-and-point" powers among the roster. The former problem can be solved by not using every member in every story (a necessity anyway with a group the size of the LSH), and especially by not having the more powerful characters appear together except against the most daunting villains. The latter tendency, an overabundance of the kinds of powers usually given to Marvel's super-heroines in the 1960s, was noted by Jim Shooter during his tenure as writer, and resulted in the creation of Karate Kid and Ferro Lad, and the subsequent inductions of Timber Wolf and Wildfire, all more physically-oriented action characters.

For all their strip's innovations and departures from the established mold of super-team conventions that grew up during the 1960s, comics as a whole seem to have taken few lessons from the Legion of Super-Heroes. It has taken an incredible length of time for any of their historic "firsts" to be duplicated, which ignorance may stem from their aforementioned isolation from the rest of the ***"Superman"*** group of titles, and indeed from the rest of the DC line as a whole. The Legion was regarded as a special case, when it was remembered at all by those who might have learned something from the feature—an "odd-ball" strip that happened in the future and involved some uncountable number of teenagers with weird names ending in "Boy," "Girl," "Lad," "Lass," and "Kid," and whose only well-known member was Superman as a boy—and even that was confusing, because what was Superman as a boy doing in the future, instead of the past? Wouldn't it have been easier to use Superman's 30th century descendant? Thus, after two decades, only now do we begin to have super-teams other than the Legion with more than a single female member, or groups whose leader is female, or organizations which interact with the existing governments and bureaucracies of their times. Even such practices as giving the members of a common-origin team some degree of private lives and non-super-hero friends outside the team itself, or of depicting any character interaction at all between the superstar members of a formulated team, can be seen to have been done first (or at least simultaneously) in the Legion stories. Indeed, the only thing anyone in comics seems to have picked up from the Legion's long history is the idea that members of a super-team who are not major characters can be killed off heroically, and allowed to remain dead. (Including the future deaths foretold in the ***"Adult Legion"*** story, the LSH still holds the record among super-groups for the most members killed in action, although the X-Men now equal their number of "actual" deaths at three.) Somehow, no writer or artist ever thought of the Legion as a model to follow when depicting a super-team. Maybe the reason was that, unconsciously, they didn't think of the Legion of Super-Heroes as a super-team book since it wasn't called ***THE LEGION OF SUPER-HEROES***, but rather ***ADVENTURE COMICS***.

The fact that the Legion ***did*** have their own book, but at the same time they ***didn't***, since their group name was not part of the indicia title, proved to be their downfall in the late 1960s. After their innumerable triumphs, culminating in their takeover of the entirety of ***ADVENTURE***, and after some eighty con-

SOUNDS BAD, BUT ISN'T THIS A PRIVATE MATTER?
AND WHY DOES THE SPACE COUNCIL WANT TO SUMMON US?
BY THE WORRIED LOOK ON BRAINIAC 5'S FACE, I'D SAY THERE'S MORE BAD NEWS COMING!
© 1981 DC Comics

The new costumes begin to appear, courtesy of Dave Cockrum.

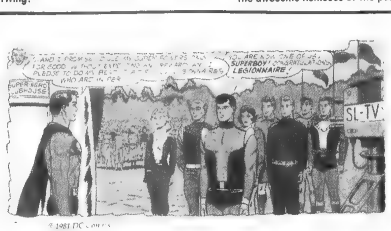
secutive monthly issues, they were unceremoniously booted out of their long-time home and into the back of ***ACTION COMICS***, while Supergirl moved from relative obscurity in ***ACTION*** to the star role in ***ADVENTURE***. The combination of outrage at this injustice with the fact that the first Supergirl issue of ***ADVENTURE, #381***, was also the first 15¢ issue after the price went up from 12¢, led this author to skip the magazine and its successive issues on the newsstands, despite having always liked the Jim Mooney version of Supergirl in ***ACTION***.

That the change was not a wise idea is now apparent by hindsight. Not only did Supergirl fail to shine in ***ADVENTURE***, and subsequently in her own title, but no replacement strip since has been able to convert DC's oldest comic into a best-selling commodity after the Legion's departure. Today, having run the gamut of "straight" adventure stories, ***Black Orchid, the Spectre, Aquaman, Superboy*** again, an anthology giant replete with half the JLA, ***Starman/Plastic Man***, and ***Dial H for Hero***, ***ADVENTURE*** is slated for cancellation at this writing.

The Legion, their page count less than half what it had been, and with many more members to feature than they had had when they were a mere back-up in ***ADVENTURE***, was reduced to running abbreviated tales featuring a small number of members each issue. Some of the series' better human interest stories resulted from this, and the established romances made some progress (Light Lass helped Timber Wolf lick a drug addiction; Bouncing Boy and Duo Damsel became a couple after her failed crush on Superboy; Karate Kid and Princess Projectra declared their feelings for each other; and the unlikely duo of Matter-Eater Lad and Shrinking Violet appeared in a story which showed the seamier side of tomorrow's Metropolis), but by and large, the strip was stifled by its cramped quarters. Multi-part epics, or even the great two-parters which formed the best of the Shooter scripts in ***ADVENTURE***, were out of the question. The back pages of ***ACTION*** were no place for a battle with Mordru the Magician, or the Fatal Five, or the team's opposite numbers, the Legion of Super-Villains, or any of the awesome nemeses of the past.

In the 1970s, the Legion would make their comeback, slowly but surely. Another editorial change would evict them even from their second-rate status in ***ACTION***, and for a time, the team would be homeless. Then, just as the cancelled X-Men at Marvel would pop up as unexpected guest-stars in other books, the Legion would appear in more short-short stories in ***SUPERBOY***—not every issue, but every few issues. Finally, with an influx of reader enthusiasm and some of the group's best-ever art by Dave Cockrum (an old fan who had turned pro while the Super-Heroes were in limbo and who redesigned several members' uniforms as well) the Legion arose to take ***SUPERBOY***'s own title away from him, piece by piece, just as they had done in ***ADVENTURE*** a decade before.

The ongoing history of the Legion of Super-Heroes, as well as that of the other super-teams discussed in this series of articles who survived the 1960s and are still being published, will be looked at later under the examination of the super-teams of the 1970s.



"The Legion of Super-Heroes" series has one of the most loyal, opinionated, and militant fan followings of any comics series—ever. That circumstance had much to do with its indefatigable will to live as a series. Corny but classic adventure stories by the likes of John Forte, Jerry Siegel, and Edmond Hamilton sparked widespread loyalty which still exists.

In conclusion, here's a complete membership roster of the Legion and its affiliate groups. Many members' first appearance listed here do not include the stories of their initiations into the team (many of which are told for the first time in ***SECRETS OF THE LEGION OF SUPER-HEROES* #1-3**). In addition to members' real names, their planets of origin (if known) are given.

The Legion of Substitute Heroes is a club of rejected would-be Legionnaires, who have formed a second-string stand-by group to act in emergencies. The Legion of Super-Pets is the human Legion's "animal auxiliary," composed of the pets of Superboy, Supergirl, and Chameleon Boy. The Super-Heroes of Lallor and the Wanderers are super-hero teams of other planets whom the Legion has encountered. The Legion Reservists and Honorary Members include three of Superboy/Superman's friends from the 20th century, two of whom assume sometime super-identities.

THE LEGION OF SUPER-HEROES

Founded: ***SUPERBOY* #147 (*80 PAGE GIANT* #47)/*ADVENTURE* #247**

1. COSMIC BOY (Rokk Krinn of Braal)
2. LIGHTNING LAD (Garth Ranzz of Winath)
3. SATURN GIRL (Imra Ardeen Ranzz of Titan, moon of Saturn)
4. TRIPLICATE GIRL (Luornu Durgo Taine of Cargg)

Joins: as of ***ACTION* #276/*SUPERBOY* #147**

5. PHANTOM GIRL (Tinya Wazzo of Bgztl)

Joins: as of ***ACTION* #276/*SUPERBOY* #147**

6. CHAMELEON BOY (Reep Daggle of Durla)

Joins: as of ***ACTION* #267**

7. COLOSSAL BOY (Gim Allon of Earth)

Joins: as of ***ACTION* #267**

8. INVISIBLE KID (Lyle Norg of Earth)

Joins: as of ***ACTION* #267**

Dies: ***SUPERBOY* #203**

9. SUPERGIRL (Linda Lee Danvers; Kara Zor-El of Krypton [Argo City])

Joins: ***ACTION* #276**

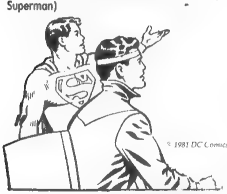
10. BRAINIAC 5 (Querl Dox of Colu)

Joins: ***ACTION* #276**

11. SUPERBOY (Clark Kent; Kal-El of Krypton)

Joins: ***ADVENTURE* #247**

See also: ***JUSTICE LEAGUE OF AMERICA*** (as Superman)



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12 ULTRA BOY (Jo Nah of Rimbor)

Joins: ***SUPERBOY* #98**

13. STAR BOY (Thom Kallor of Xanthu)

Joins: ***ADVENTURE* #282**

See also ***LEGION OF SUBSTITUTE HEROES***

14. SHRINKING VIOLET (Salu Digby of Imsk)

Joins: as of ***ACTION* #276**

15. SUN BOY (Dirk Morgna of Earth)

Joins: as of ***ADVENTURE* #290**

16. BOUNCING BOY (Chuck Taine of Earth)

Joins: as of ***ACTION* #276/*ADVENTURE* #301**

17. MON-EL (Lar Gand of Daxam)

Joins: ***ADVENTURE* #300**

18. MATTER-EATER LAD (Tenzil Ken of Bismoll)

Joins: ***ADVENTURE* #303**

19. ELEMENT LAD (Jan Arrah of Trom)

Joins: ***ADVENTURE* #307**

20. LIGHTNING LASS/LIGHT LASS (Ayla Ranzz of Winath)

Joins: ***ADVENTURE* #308**

21. DREAM GIRL (Nura Nal of Nator)

Joins: ***ADVENTURE* #317**

See also ***LEGION OF SUBSTITUTE HEROES***

22. PRINCESS PROJECTRA (of Orando)

Joins: ***ADVENTURE* #346**

23. FERRO LAD (Andrew Nolan of Earth)

Joins: ***ADVENTURE* #346**

Dies: ***ADVENTURE* #353**

24. KARATE KID (Val Armorr of Earth)

Joins: ***ADVENTURE* #346**

25. SHADOW LASS (Tasmia Malor of Talok VIII)

Joins: ***ADVENTURE* #366**

26. TIMBER WOLF (Brin Londo of Zoon; formerly Lone Wolf)

Joins: ***ADVENTURE* #372**

27. CHEMICAL KING (Condo Arlik of Phlon)

Joins: ***ADVENTURE* #372**

Dies: ***SUPERBOY* #228**

28. ERG-1/WILDFIRE (Drake Burroughs of Earth)

Joins: ***SUPERBOY* #195**

29. TYROC (Troy Stewart of Earth)

Joins: ***SUPERBOY* #218**

30. DAWNSTAR (of Earth colony Starhaven)

Joins: ***SUPERBOY* #226**

31. BLOK (of Dryad)

Joins: ***LEGION OF SUPER-HEROES* #272**

THE LEGION OF SUBSTITUTE HEROES

Founded: ***ADVENTURE* #306**

1. POLAR BOY (Brek Bannin of Tharr)
2. NIGHT GIRL (Lydda Jath of Kathoon)
3. FIRE LAD (Stag Mavlen of Shwar)
4. CHLOROPHYLL KID (Ral Benem of Mardru)
5. STONE BOY (Dag Wentim of Zwen)
6. DREAM GIRL (Nura Nal of Nalter)

Joins: as of ***ADVENTURE* #342**

Quits: ***ADVENTURE* #351**

See also ***LEGION OF SUPER-HEROES***

7. STAR BOY (Thom Kallor of Xanthu)

Joins: ***ADVENTURE* #342**

Quits: ***ADVENTURE* #351**

See also ***LEGION OF SUPER-HEROES***

8. COLOR KID (Ulu Vakk of Lupra)

Joins: as of ***ADVENTURE* #351**

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THE LEGION OF SUPER-PETS

Founded: ***ADVENTURE* #293**

1. KRYPTO (the Super-Dog) (of Krypton)
2. STREAKY (the Super-Cat) (of Earth)
3. BEPPO (the Super-Monkey) (of Krypton)
4. COMET (the Super-Horse) (Biron of Earth)
5. PROTY II (of Antares)

Joins: ***ADVENTURE* #322**

THE SUPER-HEROES OF LALLOR

Founded: ***ADVENTURE* #324**

1. BEAST BOY

Dies: ***ADVENTURE* #339**

Note: Not to be confused with the hero of the same name in ***THE DOOM PATROL***, who becomes CHANGELING in ***THE NEW TEEN TITANS***.

2. DUPLICATE BOY (Qued Orlu)
3. EVOLVO LAD
4. GAS GIRL
5. LIFE LASS

THE WANDERERS

Founded: as of ***ADVENTURE* #375**

1. CELEBRAND
2. DARTALG
3. ELVO
4. IMMORTO
5. ORNITHO
6. PSYCHE
7. QUANTUM QUEEN

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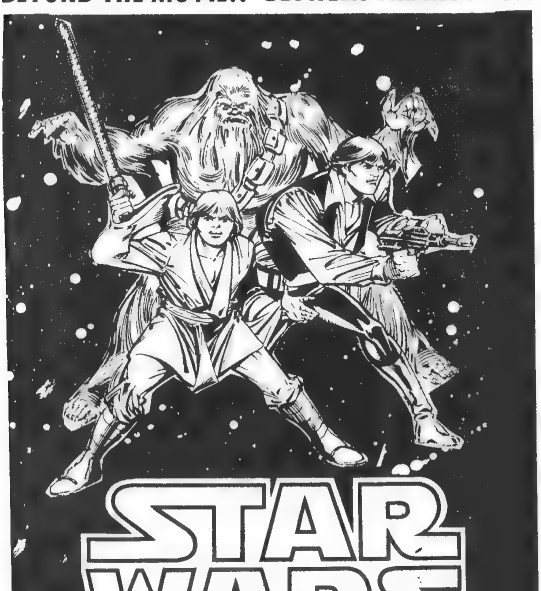
THE LEGION RESERVE (AND HONORARY MEMBERS

1. ELASTIC LAD (Jimmy Olsen of Earth)
2. Pete Ross (of Earth)
3. Insect Queen (Lana Lang of Earth)
4. ROND VIDAR (of Earth)
5. KID PSYCHO (Grill Opral of Hajor)

BEYOND THE MOVIE!! BETWEEN THE MOVIES!!



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UNDER ARCHIE GOODWIN

by Kurt Busiek

STAR WARS is hardly an easy series to write. Consider first that the movie that spawned the comics series was (and still is) one of the most successful films ever which while it gives the series an impressive sales base, also brings with it legions of Force-fans, who can get very antsy if anything the comic book doesn't "ring true" with established (or imagined) ***STAR WARS*** mythology. As if that weren't bad enough, there is ***THE EMPIRE STRIKES BACK*** (and further sequels) to contend with, which means that nothing in the comics series can contradict anything upcoming in the movie series—even if the movie people don't know (or won't tell) what those upcoming events are. The characters have to seem to live without progressing, have adventures without disturbing George Lucas' storyline, and function within a galactic civilization that the writers and artists know next to nothing about. In short, it seems the comic book has to satisfy fan demands for more ***STAR WARS***, without actually delivering it. At first glance, this seems impossible.

Roy Thomas, who wrote the series for only four issues past the initial movie adaptation, is a master of comics writing, but his four ***STAR WARS*** issues indicate that he did not quite understand these special needs of the series. The universe he began to establish as background for the Star Warriors was peopled by such interesting inhabitants as intelligent, man-sized, carnivorous green rabbits and Don Quixote parodies. The story he presented was almost the sort of space opera the movie was, except that it was a little too tongue-in-

cheek, poking fun at the story conventions ***STAR WARS*** relies upon. As a result, while it doesn't contradict the movie anywhere, the Thomas ***STAR WARS*** are irreconcilable with the flavor of the movie. Imagine them on a movie screen, and they fall apart, simply because Mark Hamill, Harrison Ford and crew just wouldn't meet big green bunnies, or make gags about legendary monsters. And David Michelinie, who admittedly has only just begun his tenure on the book, has already gone too far in the opposite direction, and stayed too close to the movie. His "reprise the Deathstar" storyline seems like an imitation of the first film, and not a continuation of it.

But Archie Goodwin, the unassuming author/editor of ***STAR WARS*** for nearly three years, managed to fully capture the aura of ***STAR WARS*** and transfer it to comics. The string of stories Goodwin created effectively adds to the films, while neither straying too far away from his source to remain consistent, nor sticking too close and becoming repetitious. Despite the series' problems (or perhaps because of them), he created a comics series with its own distinctive identity, different from anything else in the industry, and yet at the same time kept it comfortably ensconced alongside the movie(s). Goodwin's ***STAR WARS***, like Wolfman's ***TOMB OF DRACULA***, serves as an example that even the most difficult of material can be handled successfully, if the right approach is taken.

The difficulty of characterization and character development is one of the major problems in the series. Since one would assume that the characters will, from the end of one movie to the beginning of the next, pick up where they left off (and if ***THE EMPIRE STRIKES BACK*** is any example, that's true), then the characters cannot develop within the comic book series. So rather than merely reiterate basic character traits over and over, what Goodwin did was explore the characters, adding depth if not progress. The character who got the most complete exploration was Luke Skywalker, possibly because he's the most clearly defined character in the first film, or maybe just because he's the main character. We see Luke on Tatooine on two occasions, one a fill-in issue plotted by Chris Claremont (#17), in which we get to see Luke's background as a hot-rodding teenager—something vital to, but barely mentioned in, the first film. Luke returns to Tatooine in #31, where again we see the Lucas characters who never made it into the movie, Fixer and Camie. Here Goodwin gives the reader some retroactive character development, both by Camie's realization that Luke has changed a lot since his days of being "Little Wormie," and by the readers' inevitable comparison of the naive, brash Luke Skywalker they saw on Tatooine in the first movie to the Luke they see here—naive and brash still, but more confident, more capable. Another example of retroactive development occurs in #45, the ***"Death Probe"*** issue. Though Luke's training at the hands of Yoda in ***THE EMPIRE STRIKES BACK*** had quite an effect on

AND FOR THE FIRST TIME, THE FARM BOY BECOME HERO LOOKS ON THE ENEMY'S FACE.
NO.
IT IS A YOUNG FACE...NOT GREATLY DIFFERENT FROM HIS OWN. CLOSE ENOUGH TO DRIVE HOME A REALIZATION.
I...NEVER THOUGHT BEYOND THE GLORY, THE ADVENTURE.
BUT THIS IS PART OF IT, TOO! THE ENEMY'S NOT JUST ARMOUR OR A SPACECRAFT. THEY LIVE, BREATHE... LIKE YOU! KILL WHEN IT CAN BE AVOIDED...AND YOU'RE NO BETTER THAN THEM AT THEIR WORST!
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A major step in Luke's personal growth, in "The Day After the Death Star": "...rather than merely reiterate basic character traits over and over, what Goodwin did was explore the characters, adding depth if not progress."

Luke's character (for example, he manages to calm himself and find inner strength while hanging from a rapidly deteriorating handhold miles above anything, something the pre-***EMPIRE*** Luke would have been unable to do), the action in the film is too fast and furious to give that development some leisurely exploration. Goodwin helps settle the character into its new paths by having him test himself—where before he was more concerned with proving himself. Luke shows quite a bit of clear-headedness and control of his powers, although he does back that power up with pride, which just goes to show he isn't a Jedi yet.

Goodwin also expands on characterization from the movies, as in his various portrayals of Luke's relationships with the droids. He is quite friendly with them in the movie, and elects out of loyalty to keep the battle-scarred R2-D2 as his partner in the Deathstar battle rather than use a new droid. In the comics, we see a relationship only hinted at in the movie. In #26 for example, Luke angrily rounds on a rebel techno after R2 has been damaged, shouting "Don't tell **me** he's only a machine!" In the next adventure, too, both Luke and C3PO attempt to lay down

DO... DO I KNOW YOU, YOUNG WOMAN? YOU'RE NOT ON MY SHIFT...
NO. I'M FROM YOUR PAST. WHEN YOU TRAVELED FROM HERE TO ALDERAAN TO INSTRUCT A LITTLE GIRL IN GALACTIC HISTORY--
--LEIA, PROFESSOR HORADA, PRINCESS LEIA ORGANA.
©1981 Lucasfilms Ltd.
N-NO...! ARE YOU TRYING TO GET ME IN TROUBLE...? ALDERAAN IS DESTROYED... OBLITERATED BY A METEOR STORM...!
CENTRAL INFORMATION TOLD US THAT LONG AGO...! NONE OF THE ROYAL HOUSE SURVIVED... NONE!
THEY LIED TO YOU, PROFESSOR... I'M HERE TO TELL YOU THE TRUTH!

Princess Leia's role as spiritual leader of the Rebellion is emphasized by her guerilla mission to an occupied planet in *STAR WARS #30*. "Goodwin...gives her a story of her own to shine in, disconnected from the Luke and Vader end of things..."

their lives (or maybe "existence" would be the better word, in Threepio's case) for the other, establishing that there is a real bond between them. But perhaps the best portrayal of Luke in the Goodwin ***STAR WARS*** is in the ***"Red Queen"*** sequence (#35-37), in which the straightforward Luke is caught between his duty to the Alliance and his desire to exact vengeance on Darth Vader. He has to fight to keep his emotions in check, and when he ultimately gets the chance he's wanted all along, has to force himself to realize that he and the Alliance will gain more by his avoiding Vader—much as it hurts—rather than his fighting him. This story clearly shows the capacity Luke has for being a great warrior and leader, while still maintaining his image of youth and inexperience.

Leia Organa, the Princess/Senator and Rebel leader, seldom gets to do much actual leading of rebels (as befits her station) in the movies, as she's too busy running around with the boys in their more personalized war theater, but Goodwin, at least, gives her a story of her own to shine in, disconnected from the Luke and Vader end of things, in which she gets to fulfill a valuable function as a physical and spiritual leader of the Alliance (#30). Mention of another mission (in #35), and her conversations with General Dodonna throughout the series, indicate that she has other responsibilities, too. Also, her heroic-but-somewhat-proud tendencies are explored in the ***"Wheel"*** storyline (#18), when she is faced with the choice of sacrificing her honor (and future) in order to save the lives of her friends. She is adamant in her disgust for Senator Greyshade's offer, and cannot bring herself to agree to it, until Han is seemingly killed, at which point she capitulates instantly. Once the cost was demonstrated to her, she knew what she had to do, but her pride kept her from realizing that cost until "too late." On the subject of sacrifice, of course, I can hardly help but mention Han Solo's almost-sacrifice in the Wheel story also, where he appears to lay down his life for Chewbacca. His sneaky way out of things avoided our discovering whether he actually would have been that noble, or was actually the self-serving rascal he tries to appear to be. Most readers, I assume, would hold that Han would've sacrificed himself if it came to that, but to say that straight out would undermine the character's roguishness. Goodwin captured him perfectly by having him cheat his way out of a hero's death.

The best example of a character staying active without actually doing much, however, has got to be the brilliant ploy of having Darth Vader search for Luke. The idea that Darth seeks vengeance (of course) on our hero for blowing up the Death Star, but doesn't know who he is works perfectly to keep Darth in the series (since ***STAR WARS*** without Darth Vader just wouldn't be ***STAR WARS***), but it keeps him from meeting our band of stalwarts time and time again—something that would definitely have detracted from the power of Luke and Vader's duel in ***THE EMPIRE STRIKES BACK***. As it is, Luke and Vader only met once in the comics series prior to ***EMPIRE***, and that was inconclusive.

Just as Goodwin expanded our knowledge of the characters, he also got plenty of story springboards from expanding our knowledge of the ***STAR WARS*** universe, as it was hinted at in the movie. For example, Emperor Palpatine's galactic takeover was fairly recent (the last vestiges of the Republic are cleaned out of the government as the first movie starts), but the Alliance/Empire conflict in the movies doesn't tell you much about the political state of the galaxy, and how much the Empire controls, other than glimpses of Tatooine (which is way out in the boondocks somewhere and of little interest to the Empire) and Dagobah (which nobody could want to rule anyway). On several occasions, Goodwin presents another side of the Empire/Alliance conflict in the comics, again, adding depth in lieu of development. Both the ***"Wheel"*** and the ***"Red Queen"*** plotlines show parts of the galaxy uncontrolled by either the Empire or the rebels—in the first case, a satellite gambling arcade, and in the second, a religious haven. The first story involves an Imperial plot to discredit the Rebels, work up bad feeling

against them, and convince the galactic citizenry that the rebels are a danger to the supposedly-off-limits (to both sides) Wheel, all in order to take over The Wheel for the Empire (in the name of "protection") and to get ahold of the Wheel's massive profits. This political, rather than martial, emphasis is also clear in the ***"Red Queen"*** story, in which the uncommitted (and powerful, in terms of followers) planet of Monastery invites a representative from either side to make a case for their beliefs, after which Monastery will throw its weight in on one side of the fray or the other. The whole thing turns out to be a set-up of Vader's to get Luke, but even if it was a sham, it shows that not all battles in the galactic war are fought with laser-bolts. There is also a complex commercial structure to this galaxy, as well as a power hierarchy outside the military, as we learn in the ***"Siege of Yavin"*** and ***"Omega Frost"*** stories (#25, 26, & 31-34), in which the rebels are faced, not by military force, but by the economic power of the House of Tagge Industries, a galactic conglomerate whose trade importance gives it influence even with the Empire. In Goodwin's blueprint, the galaxy is a wide one, big enough for more than just the Empire and Rebels. There are worlds such as Junction and Centares, too, where the Empire exerts some sort of control, but the populace's attitudes (and their black market) make their worlds more open to the Alliance than the Empire would like.

Exploring the ***STAR WARS*** universe and characters does create a lot of material to further the series. These become characters he can do things with—develop, kill, convert or whatever—and they provide a lot of excitement that the regular cast just can't generate. I've already made mention of The House of Tagge, which figures prominently in three ***STAR WARS*** stories and kept getting mentioned in others. This multi-talented family consisted of a Baron, an Imperial General (who had a bit part in the first film), a master scientist, and a nun. The family interplay with these characters was almost as fascinating as their various clashes with the Star Warriors. Baron Orman Tagge, the head of the family, had been blinded by Darth Vader and was hell-bent on revenge, even to the extent of practicing with a light-saber for his eventual showdown with Vader. Meanwhile, he furthered his goal by trying to undermine Vader's position with the Emperor, and gain favor for The House of Tagge. He sounds more like a potential ally for the Star Warriors, considering who his enemy is, but he was also loyal to the Empire, and tried to further his schemes by destroying the Rebels. His obsessed vendettas (including one against Luke after Luke wiped out his first scheme against the Alliance) were balanced by his clinical scientist brother, Silas. Silas, who seemed to specialize in death-weapons (he designed the Omega Frost, and probably the planet funnel used in the Yavin siege), regretted his brother's misplaced zeal, until Luke incapacitated the Baron too, and the scientist realized that his brother's warrior skills and drive were needed. Their younger brother Ulric (a character so minor in the movie that he got his name mixed up with General Motti in the comics adaptation, to no ill effect) apparently only existed to supply the older brothers with ships and military backing for their schemes. The fourth and last Tagge, Domina, was another of Orman's little obsessions. He cloistered her away (in a cloister) so he could hold on to the idea that there was one part of the House of Tagge that was untouched by the corruption and vice that the others seemed to enjoy. Naturally, she turned out (with the help of Vader) to be the most vengeful and scheming of the bunch. It seemed at one point as if Skywalker and company couldn't go anywhere without running into Tagges, and they were always trouble. But they were a trouble not directly spawned by the Empire, although they may have had similar goals, and thus, they helped keep the series from having a one-note conflict, and in their various dealings and double-dealing with the Empire, helped make it not as straightforwardly menacing as it could have been.

A pair of characters who appeared fairly early in Goodwin's ***STAR WARS*** were both the sort that were built on ideas suggested in the movie but not explored. But Senator Greyshade and Valance The Hunter represented opposite sides of the coin. Greyshade, the Administrator of The Wheel, was, like Leia, a former Senator. But he was a political enemy of Leia's because her idealistic goals and his self-serving ones didn't mix. Greyshade, as

The cover from one of the intrigue-laden *"Red Queen" stories:* "It seemed at one point as if Skywalker and company couldn't go anywhere without running into Tagges, and they were always trouble."

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BUT THERE ARE OTHERS ON THE WHEEL WHOSE REACTION IS DECIDEDLY THE OPPOSITE...
SUCH AS PRINCESS LEIA ORGANA... OF THE REBEL ALLIANCE.
GREYSHADE, YOU'RE EVEN MORE DESPICABLE THAN I THOUGHT YOU WERE DURING OUR DAYS IN THE IMPERIAL SENATE!
I HAD MY FAULTS--
--BUT I NEVER WASTED A FINE MIND AS YOU'RE DOING.
©1981 Lucasfilms, Ltd

"Greyshade...was a charming rogue, fully aware of his own villainy."

Wheel Administrator, was a charming rogue, fully aware of his own villainy, who didn't let conscience bother his monetary aims. What made him more than just an interesting snake was his relationship with Master-Com, the administrative computer/robot through which he ran The Wheel. Master-Com is intrigued by the loyalty of R2-D2 and C3PO to Luke, and wants a similar friendship with Greyshade, something that helps Greyshade make the last minute decision to give over his evil intentions and allow the good guys to carry the day. The final scene with Greyshade, where he reflects that if he has to die, at least it's with the knowledge that he has a friend, is a poignant portrayal of both the value of friendship, and the droid/human relationship, and what it means.

But things are not all pie and ice cream for the droids in the ***STAR WARS*** universe. The first we saw of anti-droid sentiments was in the cantina sequence in the first film, when the bartender growled, "We don't serve their kind here." Goodwin established a galaxy-wide prejudice against droids, and plays much of it through Valance, the grim bounty hunter who has hated droids all his life, and cannot accept the fact that he himself is a cyborg, half-man half-droid. As a bounty hunter, he's a good one, but he welcomes any assignment he can get that calls for destroying mechanicals (#16), and even spends his bounties on junkyard droids, just so he can have the pleasure of destroying them. When he meets Luke and Threepio (#27) and understands the depth of their friendship and loyalty, he has to come to terms with his own self-hatred, and ends up protecting Luke from discovery by Darth Vader (#29), seeing Luke as a hope for a future in which someone like him could exist without shame. Valance has a couple of interesting distinctions to his credit. The first is that two out of three issues he appeared in did not feature the main characters of the series, and yet the power of the character made them some of the most effective issues even so. The second is that he met his death at the request of the people at Lucasfilm. Goodwin's scripts were always cleared by the Lucasfilm public relations department, and they were not always privy to Lucas' plans for the movie series, which resulted in such mix-ups as Han Solo paying off Jabba the Hut in #28, and having to be in debt to him again by the beginning of the ***EMPIRE STRIKES BACK*** adaptation. After Valance's first appearance, word came down that George Lucas had plans for a bounty hunter character (Boba Fett), and Valance would have to go. Who knows? If not for Boba Fett, we might have found out that Valance was a long-lost Tagge cousin or something!

Getting back to ***STAR WARS***-the comic's relationship with ***STAR WARS***-the-movie, one little trick of Goodwin's worth noting is that in

...LIVING WITH THE FACT THAT AT THE TRIBE-4 MEDICAL STATION...
...HALF HIS BODY WAS REPLACED BY CYBERNETIC PARTS.
TERRIBLE. FOR BEING A CYBORG ONLY MAIMES VALANCE MORE DETERMINED... THAT THE HUNT SHALL GO ON.
©1981 Lucasfilms Ltd

The cyborg Valance: "...met his death at the request of the people at LucasFilm...After Valance's first appearance, word came down that George Lucas had plans for a bounty hunter character...and Valance would have to go."

SOMEDAY SOON I'LL BE DOING IT...! LEADING AN ATTACK ON ONE OF THE EMPIRE'S TOP-OF-THE-LINE CRUISERS--
OR ASSAULTING ONE OF THEIR MAIN BASES
--OR BEST OF ALL, COMING FACE TO-FACE WITH DARTH VADER! CHALLENGING HIM SABRE TO SABRE! THAT'S THE MISSION I WANT MOST!
AND I DON'T CARE WHERE IT IS! A BARREN PLANETOID OR SOME PLACE LIKE THE DEATH STAR POWER CORE--! ANYWHERE! --JUST SO--
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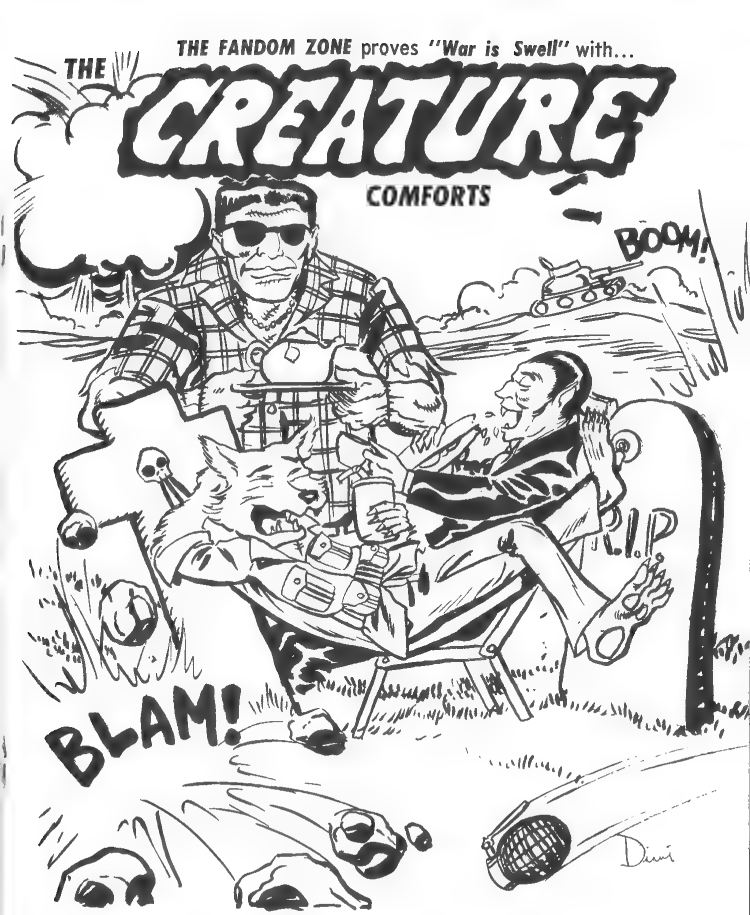
"When Goodwin writes a script, he draws thumbnail sketches of the pages to see how much room he has for dialogue in each panel... [Infantino] was under no orders to follow the Goodwin layouts, of course...and indeed, the more 'typical' Infantino style shows up [in those issues in which the layouts were interpreted more loosely]."

one way at least, he guaranteed that the thrills of the movie would be present in the comic, simply by every now and then throwing in a "bit" straight from the movie. In #14, Luke does his Tarzan swing again,~to save Leia. The Wheel storyline features both an enormous space station that the Star Warriors get chased around in (as they did in the Deathstar), and Han's last minute charge to save the good guys from Darth Vader. #26 sees Artoo wounded, as in the battle of the Deathstar, and in #31-34 Goodwin really goes to town. It's not particularly noticeable while reading it, but the entire Omega Frost story follows essentially the plot structure of the movie, from fun and games with Jawas and the cantina on Tatooine in the beginning, to the big suspenseful buildup to the rebels being wiped out by the cozmick weapon—saved only in the nick of time at the end by Luke. In the hands of a lesser writer, this might be considered plagiarism, but Goodwin so obviously doesn't need to swipe ideas from anybody that it's just a lot of fun, both for him writing it, and for those that see it when reading it.

The real base that ties Goodwin's comics to the movie so well is his skillful use of the ***STAR WARS*** atmospherics. His stories, whether the emphasis is on politics, character, action, or what-have-you, are still full of spaceships, planet-hopping, blaster-bolts, lightsabers, and all the nifty stuff that made ***STAR WARS*** so appealing in the first place. With the exception of Goodwin's first story, "**Waterworld**" (#11-15), in which Luke and the gang got caught up in a conflict that, while it was inventively plotted, and interesting in its own right, didn't have anything to do with ***STAR WARS***, all the Goodwin stories are full of fast-paced adventure that is firmly entrenched in the ***STAR WARS*** mythos. The series does the kind of things that would be expected from Lucas, if his movies came out once a month. Also, there's the fact that regardless of how well Goodwin maneuvered in the ***STAR WARS*** universe, and how ***STAR WARS***-y he was, underneath it all, Archie Goodwin is a good comic book writer, and he writes nifty stories. The two best (in my opinion, anyway) to come out of the Goodwin ***STAR WARS*** were the "**Wheel**" story and the "**Red Queen**" story. Both of those featured complex plotting, where a number of different plot threads and character threads twisted in and out of each other, until they all came together at the end, with a satisfying bang. The stories were solid, unobtrusively craftsmanlike, and fun, which again is what ***STAR WARS*** is all about.

I'd be doing the series a gross injustice, too, if I never once mentioned Carmine Infantino, or the other artists who worked with Goodwin. Infantino, of course, has been known for his distinctive SF comics work for years, and the skill and polish he brought to ***STAR WARS*** was no exception. His work on ***STAR WARS*** did look different from, say, his "**Adam Strange**" or ***FLASH*** stuff, but Goodwin ascribes that to the more illustrative inkers that finished the artwork, changing the stylized Infantino pencils into something slightly different. However, most of the Goodwin/Infantino ***STAR WARS*** were done full-script with only some done in the Marvel style (in which the artist works from a plot synopsis), and I think the difference shows. When Goodwin writes a script, he draws thumbnail sketches of the pages to see how much room he has for dialogue in each panel, and these sketches were sent to Infantino along with the script. He was under no orders to follow the Goodwin layouts, of course, but I was struck by the fact that most of Infantino's ***STAR WARS*** stuff uses squarish panels and variations on a simple six-panel page format, rather than the tall or wide rectangular panels of which Infantino has almost made a trademark—and indeed, the more "typical" Infantino style shows up in, say, #19 & 20. I'm hardly trying to cast aspersions on Infantino's ability; on the contrary, he is a highly-skilled, highly competent professional who's been drawing exciting comics for more years than I've been alive, but I just want to point out the Goodwin influence of the art, too.

Archie Goodwin left ***STAR WARS*** due to the increasing commitment that ***EPIC ILLUSTRATED*** demanded of his time, but he left behind him more than just a string of well-crafted stories. His clear perception of the ***STAR WARS*** appeal, and skillful implementation of it in such a way as to avoid the manifold difficulties that the concept carries with it created a particular approach to comics writing, one especially tailored for this one particular series. This careful attention to the needs of the series over and above anything else, just goes once again to show that good comics are as much a matter of proper handling as they are of talent.


THE FANDOM ZONE proves "War is Swell" with...
THE CREATURE
COMFORTS
BOOM!
R.I.P.
BLAM!

Fandom Almanac

COMICS CLUBS

Easley, SC. THE COLLECTORS CLUB. Monthly newsletter published. Membership: $5.00/year (includes 12 issues of newsletter). For info, contact: Steve Haynie, Rt. #6, Easley, SC 29640.

Fullerton, CA. WEST COAST COMICS CLUB. Meets at Fullerton Science Lecture Hall, #121, California State University, 7:00 p.m. Contact: Barry Short, 420 West 4th Street, San Dimas, CA 91773 (714) 599-2488.

Maplewood, N.J. COMICS CLUB MAPLEWOOD. Meets at 29 Norfolk Avenue, 8:00-9:00 p.m. Contact: Comic Club Maplewood, P.O. Box 65, Maplewood, NJ 07040.

Mt. Prospect, IL. PROSPECT HIGH SCHOOL COMIC BOOK CLUB. Meets at Prospect High School, Room 130, 801 W. Kensington Rd., every Tuesday at 3:00 p.m. Contact: R. Marr.

Nepean, Ontario, Canada. INTERNATIONAL COMIC COLLECTOR'S CLUB. Publishes a quarterly magazine and bulletin. Membership is $10/year. Contact: Ken Gorman or Mike Berthiaume, P.O. Box 11336 Postal Station H, Nepean, Ontario, Canada K2H5Z0.

Phoenix, AZ. PHOENIX COMIC BOOK CLUB. Meets at Quality Inn West, 2420 W. Thomas, 11:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. Contact: Ken Strack, N. 22nd St., Phoenix, AZ 85018 (602) 992-3323.

Pittsburgh, PA. PITTSBURGH COMIX CLUB. Meets at Eddie's Comix & SF Shop, 11 Federal Street, every second Saturday from 4:00 to 6:00 p.m. Contact: Ben Pondexter, 827 Anaheim, Pittsburgh, PA 15210.

Rochester, NY. COMIC BOOK PEN PAL CLUB. Newsletter published. For info, contact: The Comic Book Man, 135 Glen Ellyn Way, Rochester, NY 14618.

St. Louis, MO. SPECTOR COMICS CLUB. Meets at Century Bowl, 7508 Michigan, 1:00-4:00 p.m. Contact: Anthony Gladish, 3917 Ohio Street, St. Louis, MO 63118.

Urbana, IL. CHAMPAIGN-URBANA COMIC CLUB. Meets at the Illinois Union Building, Room 215, 712 W. Illinois, Urbana, every Thursday at 7:00 p.m. Contact: Mel DeSart.

Vancouver, B.C., Canada. VANCOUVER COMIC BOOK CLUB. Publishes the VCBC Bulletin and sponsors conventions. (V-Con). Contact: VCBC, P.O. Box 48873, Bentall Sta., Vancouver, B.C., Canada V7X1A8.

COMICS CONVENTIONS

Oct. 10-11. Minneapolis Comic Convention. Hotel Leamington, 10th St. and 3rd Ave. S., Minneapolis, MN. Guests include Jim Shooter and Ken Fletcher. Activities include panels, art shows, auctions, films, etc. Admission is $3.00. For further information contact: MPLS Comic Conventions, Box 3221 Traffic Station, Minn, MN 55403.

Oct. 25. Chicago Minicon. Americana Congress Hotel, 520 S. Michigan Ave., Chicago, IL. Admission is 75¢. For more information contact: (312) 274-1832.

Oct. 2-4. Port Con. Econo Lodge, 1061 Government St., Mobile, Al. Guests include Don Glut, Wilson "Bob" Tucker, and David Kyle. Events include films, art shows, costume parade, and panels. Admission is $12.00. For more information contact: Linda McCaulla, 1405 Athey Rd., Mobile, AL. 36608.

Oct. 4. Sunday Funnies. Sheraton-Boston Hotel, Boston, Ma. Admission is $2.00. For more information contact: (617) 747-0665.

Nov. 7-8. Newcon. Sheraton-Boston Hotel, Boston, Ma. Guests include George Perez, L.B. Cole, and Fred Schwab. For more information contact: (617) 747-0665.

Nov. 27-29. Creation Con. New York Statler Hotel, Manhattan, N.Y. Art Displays, Costume Parade, Panels, and Guests. For more information contact: Creation, 421 7th Ave, Suite 908, NY, NY. 10001.

Dec. 26-30. Comic Book & Sport Card Show. Chapel Hill Mall, Akron, OH. For more information contact: Bob Bosnyak, 1030 Kling St., Akron, OH 44301.

May 14-16, 1982. Lepracon 8. Caravan Inn, 3333 E. Van Buren St, Phoenix, AZ. 85008. Guests include George Barr and William Rotsler. Activities include Wargaming, Panels, Masquerade, and Films. Memberships are $8.00 in advance. For more information contact: Lepracon 8, P.O. Box 14590, Phoenix, AZ 85063.

July 2-5, 1982. Westercon-35. The Adams Hilton, Central & Adams, Phoenix, AZ. Guests include Gordon Dickson and David Gerrold. Memberships are $15.00 in advance. For more information contact: Westercon-35, P.O. Box 11644, Phoenix, AZ. 85061.

by Don and Maggie Thompson

ENDINGS AND BEGINNINGS

[Note: Most of the readers of this report were born by 1967, but how many remember events in fandom then? If you're one of the people who do, how about letting us hear from you at 8786 Hendricks Road, Mentor, Ohio 44060? We'll be glad to interpolate your comments into this history; just because we've barrelled through 1967 by the time you read this is no reason to feel that it's too late to give your views on that golden year.]

If you've been following "***Fandom Origins***" and watched the PBS-TV show ***CONNECTIONS***, you may begin to see that fandom has its own series of Connections—which produced Comics Fandom As It Now Exists. You've noted that reprint zines were begun by Ed Aprill, the fan initiating the custom of publishing limited editions of complete daily-strip sequences. You've read about the increasing spread of comics cons.

In 1967 a publication was born which (though no one could have suspected it at the time) led to one of fandom's focal points (and possibly another): Out of ***NEWFANGLES*** came ***THE BUYER'S GUIDE FOR COMIC FANDOM*** and, maybe, out of that came Bob Overstreet's ***PRICE GUIDE***. But you'll find those connections later. For now, we're concerned with 1967.

"In 1967," says ***THE PEOPLE'S ALMANAC***, "9,419 Americans died in Vietnam, more than in all previous years combined." Increasingly, opposition to that war became itself militant. Increasingly, too, much of the youth of America turned to dropping out or lighting up or otherwise Doing Its Own Thing. Comics fans did theirs.

There was no widespread voter turn-out for the seventh annual comic art fan awards. Mark Hanerfeld tallied the votes, using the previous year's ballot (eliminating only the "Best All-Time Great Comic Strip" award), and asked voters to simply fill in the blanks. It was the first balloting done without a preliminary nominating ballot and may have intimidated voters with its number of categories and lack of guidance from nominations. In any case, only eighty-eight ballots were returned (but, since Hanerfeld was the first to specify how many ballots were involved in the final vote, it may not have been the lowest turn-out ever). (Results were printed in ***ON THE DRAWING BOARD #67***, June, 1968.)

This is a good time to remind readers that ours is only one angle from which comics fan

Fandom Zone

history can be viewed; we almost forgot to mention, for example, the coming and going of King Comics (a line which boasted that it *had* to succeed because there could be no returns—while we dourly pointed out that most comics fans couldn't find King Comics on the stands at all; clever marketing, that). We're almost bound to forget some of the ephemera of the comics world; the Batman explosion of comics circulations tempted entries into the field—entries that soon foundered. (It happened on television, too. ***CAPTAIN NICE***—with the otherwise excellent William Daniels—came on NBC in January and went in August. ***MR. TERRIFIC*** did the same on CBS.)

C. C. Beck, long a fan favorite, provided Lightning Comics with his ***FATMAN, THE HUMAN FLYING SAUCER*** which ran (cover dates) from the April to the August-September issue, three issues. King Comics entered the field late in the year and managed to hang on for a couple of years before its lack of sales caught up with it. (If you don't have returns, you don't know what isn't selling. If you keep producing what isn't selling, you're going to end up with wholesale unwilling to order, and you end up with a sudden stock of unsaleable four-color product. That's assuming you have good distribution in the first place, which King didn't.)

The general run of comics had by this time begun to print circulation figures as a matter of course (second-class mail being cheaper for subscriptions than other classes). We compiled a relatively complete list of average paid circulations for comics in 1967:

805,700	***BATMAN***
649,300	***SUPERMAN***
547,100	***SUPERBOY***
527,200	***WORLD'S FINEST***
484,648	***ARCHIE*** (was 491,691 in 1966)
450,700	***JIMMY OLSEN***
448,400	***LOIS LANE***
426,300	***DETECTIVE***
420,900	***ACTION***
412,800	***ADVENTURE***
411,235	***MAN FROM UNCLE***
385,800	***JUSTICE LEAGUE*** (was 408,219)
384,450	***TARZAN*** (was 338,052) -
361,663	***AMAZING SPIDER-MAN*** (was 340,155)
349,632	***BETTY AND VERONICA*** (was 342,295)
342,400	***BRAVE & BOLD*** (was 279,406)
329,536	***FANTASTIC FOUR*** (was 329,379)
310,665	***DISNEY'S COMICS*** (was 346,250)
308,736	***DENNIS THE MENACE***
298,219	***THOR*** (was 296,251)
287,422	***JUGHEAD*** (was 284,928)
285,544	***LAUGH*** (was 282,731)
282,199	***ARCHIE'S JOKE BOOK*** (was 286,865)
279,885	***FLINTSTONES***
278,901	***UNCLE SCROOGE*** (was 297,516)
275,361	***DAREDEVIL***

THE NEXT DAY AT STARK'S SHOP...
THE JOKER JUST LEFT! HE RETURNED TWO COLLECTIONS OF STAMPS, AS HE PROMISED - BUT THEY'RE RUBBER STAMPS!
AND IN WESTON'S OFFICE, AT THE DUDE RANCH...
THAT HAT PROMISED TO GIVE ME $10,000 FOR HIS $5,000 - HE STOLE BUT HE LEFT STAGE MONEY!
THEN...I'M NEXT!
©1981 DC Comics

Riding high on the coat-tails of the phenomonally-successful *BATMAN* TV show, the *BATMAN* comic book was the industry's high-seller for 1967.

275,099	***LIFE WITH ARCHIE*** (was 300,954)
270,050	***KORAK***
269,139	***AVENGERS*** (was 269,994)
269,132	***TALES TO ASTONISH*** (was 256,145)
267,000	***FLASH***
266,815	***BUGS BUNNY***
266,034	***X-MEN*** (was 255,070)
264,667	***LOST IN SPACE***
260,930	***SGT. FURY*** (was 268,499)
257,342	***CAPTAIN AMERICA*** (was 252,239)
256,448	***TOM AND JERRY***
255,470	***DONALD DUCK***
243,688	***VOYAGE TO THE BOTTOM OF THE SEA***
242,821	***PEP***
241,735	***PORKY PIG***
241,561	***STRANGE TALES*** (was 261,069)
240,407	***ARCHIE'S PALS 'N' GALS***
239,700	***METAL MEN***
238,075	***MIGHTY SAMSON***
236,720	***TWILIGHT ZONE***
234,200	***AQUAMAN***
232,565	***TUROK***
229,100	***YOGI BEAR***
225,625	***BONANZA***
220,783	***WOODY WOODPECKER***
216,100	***MAGNUS***
208,135	***DR. SOLAR***
205,221	***RAWHIDE KID***
205,083	***MICKEY MOUSE***
202,100	***G. I. COMBAT***
201,700	***GREEN LANTERN***
196,500	***OUR ARMY AT WAR***
196,057	***ARCHIE'S MADHOUSE*** (was 220,056)
192,113	***SAD SACK***
191,623	***ADVENTURES OF LITTLE ARCHIE***
189,500	***SHOWCASE***
187,400	***YOUNG LOVE***
187,400	***YOUNG ROMANCE***
184,100	***ATOM*** (was 232,850)
182,200	***CHALLENGERS OF THE UNKNOWN***
180,800	***JERRY LEWIS***
179,592	***LITTLE DOT***
178,300	***GIRLS' LOVE STORIES***
177,303	***SPOOKY***
175,000	***WONDER WOMAN***
174,500	***HEART THROBS***
173,519	***MILLIE THE MODEL***
170,400	***GIRLS' ROMANCES***
165,700	***TOMAHAWK***
162,600	***TALES OF THE UNEXPECTED***
160,000	***STAR SPANGLED WAR***
158,500	***HOUSE OF MYSTERY***
157,900	***DOOM PATROL***
157,700	***BLACKHAWK***
152,200	***OUR FIGHTING FORCES***
150,200	***SUGAR & SPIKE*** (was 190,515)
149,700	***SECRET HEARTS***
146,600	***STRANGE ADVENTURES***
140,005	***ARMY WAR HEROES***
135,266	***GHOSTLY TALES***
134,018	***ROMANTIC STORY***
125,710	***CAREER GIRL ROMANCES***
120,890	***TOP ELIMINATOR***
120,713	***SWEETHEARTS***
120,563	***HOT RODS AND RACING CARS***
120,328	***CHEYENNE KID***
120,310	***I LOVE YOU***
115,412	***LOVE DIARY***
114,700	***FOX AND CROW***
112,413	***JUST MARRIED***
111,410	***TEEN CONFESSIONS***
110,615	***TEXAS RANGERS***

This will give you a picture of what comics were in the comics picture that year (remember, though, that new titles didn't list circulations). (***ACTION, ADVENTURE, JIMMY OLSEN, LOIS LANE, SUPERBOY,*** and ***SUPERMAN*** —all of Mort Weisinger's comics except for ***WORLD'S FINEST***— lost more than 50,000 circulation from 1966.) The circulation of ***STRANGE ADVENTURES*** may give one reason that the fan-favorite "***Deadman***" did not survive as a regular feature; the stories were good and the art was excellent. Today, such a strip might make out very well in sales to

ALLEY AWARDS FOR 1967

I. Best Comic Magazine Section

1. Best Adventure Title with the Main Character in the Title: ***SPIDER-MAN*** (38 votes)
2. Best Adventure Hero Title with One or More Characters in Own Strip: ***STRANGE TALES*** (44)
3. Best Super Hero Group Title: ***FANTASTIC FOUR*** (71)
4. Best Non-Super-Powered Group Title: ***CHALLENGERS OF THE UNKNOWN*** (27)
5. Best Fantasy/SF/Supernatural Title: ***THE MANY GHOSTS OF DR. GRAVES*** (21)
6. Best Western Title: ***GHOST RIDER*** (31)
7. Best War Title: ***SGT. FURY & HIS HOWLING COMMANDOS*** (53)
8. Best Humor Titles:
   A. Teenage: ***ARCHIE*** (25)
   B. Costumed Hero: ***NOT BRAND ECCH*** (58)
   C. Juvenile: ***UNCLE SCROOGE*** (25)
9. Best All-Reprint Title: ***FANTASY MASTERPIECES*** (51)
10. Best Combination New & Old Material Title: ***MARVEL SUPER-HEROES*** (32)

II. Best Professional Work

1. Best Editor: Stan Lee (61)
2. Best Writer: Stan Lee (53)
3. Best Pencil Artist: Jack Kirby (30)
4. Best Inking Artist: Joe Sinnott (27)
5. Best coloring: ***MAGNUS, ROBOT FIGHTER*** (22)
6. Best Cover: ***STRANGE ADVENTURES #207*** (15)
7. Best Full-length Story: ***"Who's Been Lying in My Grave?"*** (***STRANGE ADVENTURES #205***) (17)
8. Best Feature Story: "Lost Continent of Mongo" (***FLASH GORDON #4***) (10)
9. Best Regular Short Feature: TIE
   "Tales of Asgard (***THOR***) (31)
   "Tales of the Inhumans" (***THOR***) (31)
10. Hall of Fame Award: ***THE SPIRIT*** by Will Eisner (17)

III. The Popularity Poll

1. Best Costumed or Powered Hero: Spider-Man (32)
2. Best Normal Adventure Hero: Nick Fury, Agent of S.H.I.E.L.D. (26)
3. Best Super-Powered Group: Fantastic Four (67)
4. Best Normal Adventure Group: Challengers of the Unknown (25)
5. Best Male Normal Supporting Character: J. Jonah Jameson (28)
6. Best Female Normal Supporting Character: Mary Jane Watson (17)
7. Best Villain: Doctor Doom (51)
8. Best New Strip: ***"Deadman"*** (52)
9. Best Revived Strip: ***BLUE BEETLE*** (18)
10. Strip Most Needing Improvement: ***BATMAN*** (12)
11. Strip Most Desired for Revival: ***"Adam Strange"*** (23)

IV. Newspaper Strip Section

1. Best Adventure Strip: ***PRINCE VALIANT*** (32)
2. Best Human Interest Strip: ***ON STAGE*** (27)
3. Best Humor Strip: ***PEANUTS*** (40)
4. Best Humor Panel: ***DENNIS THE MENACE*** (17)
5. Best Miscellaneous Strip: ***RIPLEY'S BELIEVE IT OR NOT*** (10)
6. Hall of Fame Award: ***FLASH GORDON*** by Alex Raymond (34)

V. Fanzine and Fan Activity Section

1. Best All-Article Fanzine: TIE:
   GOSH WOW (7)
   BATMANIA (7)
2. Best All-Strip Fanzine: ***STAR STUDDED COMICS*** (13)
3. Best All-Fiction Fanzine: ***STORIES OF SUSPENSE*** (7)
4. Best Article/Strip Zine: ***FANTASY ILLUSTRATED*** (30)
5. Best Text Fiction/Strip Zine: ***STAR-STUDDED COMICS*** (20)
6. Best Article/Text Fiction Zine: TIE:
   GOSH WOW (4)
   HUH! (4)
7. Best Fannish One-Shot: ***FANDOM ANNUAL*** (6)
8. Best Article on Comic Book Material: "Blue Bolt and Gang" (***GOSH WOW #1***) (10)
9. Best Article on Comic Strip Material: ***"Gully Foyle"*** (***STAR STUDDED #11***) (11)
10. Best Regular Fan Column: ***"WHAT'S NEWS"*** (Dave Kaler) (23)
11. Best Fan Text Fiction: ***"Nightwalker"*** (Larry Brody) (***GOSH WOW #1***) (10)
12. Best Fan Comic Strip: ***"Xal-Kor"*** (Richard Green) (17)
13. Best Fan Artist: George Metzger (18)
14. Best Fan Writer: Larry Herndon (13)
15. Best Fan Project: 1967 South-Western Con (12)
16. Best Newsletter: ***ON THE DRAWING BOARD*** (Bob Schoenfeld) (59)

A scene from *NOT BRAND ECCH #1.*

I DON'T NEED A SINGLE THING, THANKS!
I HAD MY 3,000 MILE CHECKUP ONLY YESTERDAY!
BUT, IF YOU HAVE A CLEAN REST ROOM--
PLEASE, GENTLE VISITOR--AND HORSE, I LEAD A QUIET, SHELTERED LIFE HERE... WITH MY ART, MY MUSIC, AND MY DEAR, SWEET THOUGHTS!
SAY! YOU MUST BE A VERY NICE PERSON!
ARE ALL EARTHMEN AS PURE-HEARTED AS YOU?
DEAR ME, NO! SOME OF THEM ARE ACTUALLY ROUGHNECKS!
WOULD YOU BELIEVE THAT THERE ARE PEOPLE WHO LOSE THEIR TEMPER--AND HAVE BEEN KNOWN TO SHOUT?!?
BUTTERFLIES I HAVE LOVED

©1981 Marvel Comics Group

Fandom Zone

ACG's two major super-heroes meet near the end of the run. Cover art by Schaffenberger.

comics specialty shops alone. Then, fan influence was minor at best, and fan sales alone couldn't keep a title alive.

If comics as items of fan appreciation weren't making it, neither were comics as pop art. The "DC Go-Go Checks" first appeared on comics cover-dated August 1967. (For those of you too young to remember this attempt to manufacture a pop culture symbol, we'll explain that the Go-Go checks were yellow and black checkerboard patterns that ran across the tops of all DC covers. Ugly and garish, they did at least identify DC comics at a glance for anyone who cared.)

A more major departure was ACG. The American Comics Group had continued for years to churn out a variety of titles, but 1967 saw the last of them. Responsible for such titles as ***HERBIE*** and such characters as Nemesis and Magicman, ACG sometimes elicits today articles filled with fond memories of the line as a whole. It did not produce much fan enthusiasm during its life, however.

There was a fannish birth in 1967, though, that seemed minor at the time but had long-range results. At the time, it seemed to be just another bit of fan activity designed to fill a need we felt: We published the first bi-monthly issue of ***NEWFANGLES*** and said, "We intend it to be a regularly published (monthly, if interest warrants) comics fandom newsletter. It will concentrate on fan news—marriages, births, deaths drastic alterations in the lives of fans, inductions, changes of address, convention news, major projects, and, of course, so forth. We will run brief review of fanzines and occasional pro news, if we can get it."

There had been a number of zines aiming at getting news of upcomings comics and such to an eager fan audience. There were none in comics fandom that aimed at giving circulation to *fan* news, and the big headline of the first issue (March) was "It's a Girl for the Ryans!" (Australian fans Jan and John Ryan had become parents of Fiona Leigh Ryan.) We ran changes of address and that sort of thing, and our circulation was not enormous.

NEWFANGLES news from the rest of 1967 was not of earth-shaking calibre. Births (including our first-born Valerie), deaths (including those of Robert Powell and Hugo Gernsback), and Richard Kyle's birthday were reported. We reported that Mike Barrier (despite two sprained wrists) passed his bar exam, that Australian postal workers were staging a slow-down, and that Fred Patten was unanimously elected Central Mailer of CAPA-alpha, the first comics amateur publishing association. Little did we know that our circulation would eventually grow from about fifty to five hundred eighty (which doesn't sound like much until you try to gather the news, mimeograph it, collate and staple it, address it, stamp it, and mail it each and every month.

One other fresh fan concept was introduced that year: Ed Aprill's continuing publication of daily strips. ***CARTOONIST SHOWCASE*** contained the first thirty-two ***JAMES BOND*** strips and also the first thirty-two ***MODESTY BLAISE*** strips, all printed clearly and in large size.

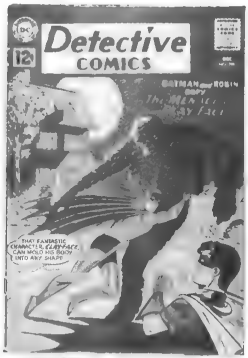
As comics and companies were floundering right and left, the first notable refugee from comics fandom took hold and cemented his position in the industry itself. Roy Thomas had begun his pro activity with a script for Charlton's ***SON OF VULCAN***, which he had submitted while still a fan. Heartened by his sale, he went to New York City and found a job in the industry; he worked as Mort Weisinger's assistant at DC for a couple of weeks. Moving speedily to Marvel at last, he worked initially on such sure-fire winners as ***MILLIE THE MODEL*** and ***SGT. FURY*** before graduating to ***DOCTOR STRANGE*** and other super-types (which is not—yet, at least—a registered trademark).

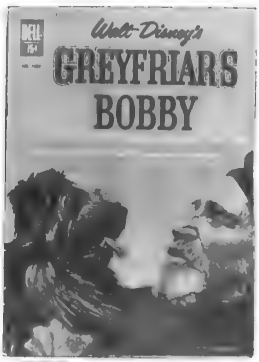
While pro companies underwent convulsions, a generation of people who had grown up on comics went into other methods of comics production. Roy Thomas opted for the traditional comics world; Robert Crumb opted for lower press runs with fewer restrictions on content. ***ZAP #1*** is described by M. Thomas Inge as the "first popular underground comic book," and it's certain that Crumb is virtually revered today as a founder of what are called "underground comix."

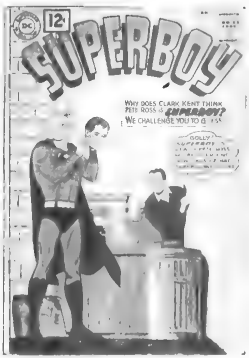
ZAP #1 was published in 1967, and its influences on fandom as a whole were only gradual; comics fans tended (and tend) to be too young to purchase much of what is produced in the field. Nevertheless, a vast number of fans of underground comix are—almost of necessity—comics fans. Gilbert Shelton had been producing ***WONDER WART-HOG*** for years by the time ***ZAP #1*** appeared, and the second and final issue of ***WONDER WART-HOG MAGAZINE*** was dated Spring 1967 (another folding for the year, you'll note), but ***WWH*** appeared in aboveground or college publications. It was the Wonderful World of Underground that would eventually give Shelton the fame he so richly deserved with ***THE FABULOUS FURRY FREAK BROTHERS***.

Next month: 1968 (It isn't easy coming up with titles, you know.)

20 Years Ago this Month







Tarzan OF THE COMICS

Original art by Chuck Patton. © *1987 Edgar Rice Burroughs, Inc.*

by Lou Mougin

Everybody ought to know the story by now. While en route to the British west coast of Africa, John Clayton, Senior, and his wife, Alice, are witness to a mutiny aboard their ship. The mutineers' leader spares them in memory of an act of kindness extended him, but he is forced to put them ashore with a large stock of supplies to save them from the crew. They reach the jungle-infested coast of Africa. There the Claytons' son, also named John, is born. A year afterward, Alice Clayton dies and John Clayton is killed when apes attack his cabin. But their infant son is taken by a she-ape whose baby had recently been killed. The child is named Tarzan ("white skin" in ape talk) and raised among the apes, as one of their own.

Tarzan grows to young manhood among the apes, learns the common language of all animals—in Rudyard Kipling fashion—and becomes a perfect and unequalled physical specimen. His mind, surprisingly, is not stunted by this environment; his studies of his father's books teach more of the world beyond the jungle. Later, he comes into contact with both black and white men, including his first true friend (Lt. Paul D'Arnot), and Jane Porter, a woman from Baltimore, whose party is stranded for a time near Tarzan's home by another ship mutiny. How he finally gets to America, weds Jane, claims his rightful title as Lord Greystoke, encounters the evil Nikolas Rokoff and the priestess La, has a son named Korak and undergoes numerous adventures in lost lands and against political enemies in two World Wars, is all chronicled in twenty-four volumes of ***"Tarzan"*** novels by Tarzan's creator, Edgar Rice Burroughs.

Adventures of "alternate" Tarzans soon sprang up like soldiers from dragons' bicuspids. The basic story, with alterations, got into the comic strips, the movies, the serials, radio shows, records and, much later, television. The comic strips, many done by the incomparable Hal Foster and Burne Hogarth, found their way into comic books as reprints starting in 1936 and continuing through the 1950s. Everywhere, in every medium, Tarzan was a hit.

So, it's quite surprising that it took until 1947 for someone to do an ***original "Tarzan"*** comic book.

After all, when a character has succeeded in books, films, radio and newspaper strips, one can't be ***too*** careful, can one?

More than likely, Burroughs simply didn't think that an original Tarzan was needed. The books (***TIP TOP***, ***SPARKLER*** and various one-shots) that reprinted the strips did well enough, so why bring out a book of new material to compete with them? And anyways, who ***could*** compete with the excellent comic-strip version?

But, by the 1940s, original comic books were there to stay. So, whoever initiated the first move being unimportant, Dell Comics received permission to begin all-new Tarzan adventures in a ***TARZAN*** comic book. There wasn't really a better choice, since Dell was then the biggest company in existence and subsisted almost totally on adaptations of licensed characters. But they were cautious—the first Dell ***"Tarzan"*** was an issue of their "showcase" line, ***FOUR COLOR COMICS***. It

WHERE NOW, TARZAN?
UP THE RIVER —LOOKING FOR NESTING PLACES! THERE IS NO TELLING HOW FAR WE MAY NEED TO GO!
KE-HONK!
From TARZAN #186. ©1968 Edgar Rice Burroughs, Inc.
TARZAN
NO DANGER! HE'S MISSED HIS CHANCE!

"Marsh has been criticized and lauded for his technique, but both schools seem to miss the point: His style worked. It worked for about 17 years!" Above is one of Marsh's *TARZAN*'s "action" scenes.

was called ***"Tarzan and the Devil Ogre,"*** illustrated by Jesse Marsh. The book sold well enough for another ***FOUR COLOR*** issue, ***"Tarzan and the Fires of Tohr." That*** book sold well enough for them to institute another title, ***TARZAN***, at year's end. That title would continue through five publishers and various interpreters until its cancellation in 1979, over thirty years later.

But the original Tarzan of Dell comics was the most durable version, lasting from 1947 to 1965 without letup. The artist on virtually all of these stories was Jesse Marsh. He was paired with a Dell writer who would continue with the series even after Marsh left, Gaylord DuBois.

The Dell Tarzan (who, actually, continued well on into the Gold Key days) was a synthesis of the movie version of the character, the portrayal in the less popular novels, and some original elements. Of course, some accession had to be made to the movies; they were the vehicles that really kept Tarzan in the public eye. (If you doubt it, take a look at the multitudes who think Tarzan actually talks in a "Me-Tarzan-you-Jane" manner.) And besides, the kids who read the comic books were more likely to have seen the flicks rather than have read the books.

Thus, Tarzan was placed in a "jungle world" of Dell's creation. His wife Jane was a brunette. His son was named Boy and hung around with another kid named Dombie, getting into trouble. They lived in the grasslands and jungle of Africa and, apparently, never had the fabulous estate with which Lord Greystroke was endowed in the books. (In fact, Tarzan was never called Lord Greystroke!) Paul D'Arnot showed sporadically as a supporting character over the years, as did La, the jungle's ***Belle Dame Sans Merci***, a priestess of long-lost Opar. There was a nutty paleontologist named Alexander MacWhirtle, who became Tarzan's bosom buddy and had to be rescued periodically from traps into which he blundered. There was Argus the giant eagle, and Goliath the titanic lion. Other Burroughs holdovers included the lost Roman cities of Athne and Cathne, the triceratops-infested land of Pal-Ul-Don whose people had black fur and tails (and let's not forget the supporting characters Om-At and Pan-At-Lee!) and the Arabic Shitras, who would show up periodically to raise Hell. Altogether it was a pretty fun cast, if you encountered it at the right age.

Jesse Marsh's Tarzan is, in this writer's opinion, visually the least appealing of any of the comics versions, and he could hardly be called a "savage." Rather than Fighting Evil, Tarzan's main mission in life seemed to be rescuing lost explorers, baby apes, lion cubs, kids, astronauts, paleontologists, photographers and wives. He never took a human life, and raw combat was always eschewed; there was more violence in a Dell funny animal title than in their ***TARZAN*** books! About the most the Ape-Man did was wrestle an ape or kill a lion. When he did close with bad guys, his fights weren't of the super-hero variety. The art was, to put it bluntly, crude and simplistic, easily comprehensible and unexciting. But it ***worked.***

Marsh has been criticized and lauded for his technique, but both schools seem to miss the point: His style worked. It worked for about 17 years! Maybe the kids only bought it because it said ***TARZAN*** on the cover, but they bought it. Marsh is not fan meat and never will

be... but who, back then, were the "fans"?

(Once, back in the early 1950s, Edgar Rice Burroughs became dissatisfied with the way the Tarzan comic strip was being run. He wrote a letter to the people in charge of the strip, and told them about the Dell comic book version which was selling out its run every issue. Why, he wondered, couldn't the comic strip take some pointers from the book?)

It should be noted that Marsh and DuBois weren't without some humor; once Tarzan ran afoul of a knight-errant named Hal Hogarth (!) and was forced to do battle with an ape named Korak the Killer! But the ***TARZAN*** title, which became a Gold Key comic after Western Publishing split with Dell, remained pretty well staid and static. It continued, virtually without any change from its basic, "comprehensible and unexciting" format, well into the 1960s.

Finally, with issue #154 (1965) a new era began. Marsh was forced to leave the book due to illness, and his successor, who had been groomed for the position for some time, now came to the fore. He had done a few ***"Tarzan"*** tales since the mid-1950s, taken over the backup strip ***"Brothers of the Spear"*** and turned it into a well-done mini-epic, and illustrated the first classic issues of ***KORAK*** as well as the long and memorable run of ***MAGNUS, ROBOT FIGHTER***. Now, finally, Tarzan would have an artist ranking with the best of the comic-strip titans... none other than Russ Manning!

The change might also have been forced by the appearance of a superior Tarzan book on the stands at the time, Charlton's ***JUNGLE TALES OF TARZAN***. At the time, the rights to Burroughs' creations were being debated in court, and Charlton was one of those who seized on the situation to bring forth an unauthorized ***"Tarzan"*** book. Actually, it was much better than the Marsh work at the time, as writer Joe Gill vowed that he, and artist Sam Glanzman, would recapture the spirit of the original ERB version through a series of adaptations of stories from the collection of the same title. These, in fact, were the first Tarzan adaptations from the Burroughs books in original comics. ***JUNGLE TALES*** lasted four issues before ERB, Inc. forced it to halt, but it had made its impact—a dent on the Burroughs bulwark. Good ***"Tarzan"*** stories ***could*** be done, if the company would just put the work in capable hands.

Well, no hands were more capable than Russ Manning's. In his first issue all the old Jungle World characters were thrown out, and Tarzan became a knifeblade-clean super-hero who bore as much resemblance to Marsh's hero as a biplane does to a DC-10. Tarzan's savage musculature put Charles Atlas to shame. Not even Johnny Weissmuller could compete with ***this*** Tarzan! Manning's jungle could look like a well-tended park at times, but mostly it was ***jungle***, claustrophobic with vines, limbs and greenery. When Tarzan leaped atop a charging lion, you could see exactly what phrases like "saber-like claws" meant! Manning's action sequences were brief, graceful and brutal. No other artist, before or after, has portrayed jungle combat as fiercely or convincingly, save perhaps for Hogarth. And, finally, the females of the strip looked fit enough to have stepped out of a 1940s Fiction House jungle title. Manning's version of Tarzan became the ultimate graphic representation of the character in comic books.

From Williams Publishing British book. © 1971 Edgar Rice Burroughs, Inc.

And that was just a warm-up to the main course. Issue #154 closed out with this announcement:

BIG NEWS FOR TARZAN FANS!
WATCH YOUR NEWSSTAND! On sale October 28, Gold Key Comics will bring you the December issue of TARZAN, the first of a series of authentic, authorized adaptations of the original TARZAN novels by Edgar Rice Burroughs.
For readers unfamiliar with Tarzan's origin, we urge that they do not miss this issue, with its exciting picture-story of Burroughs' first Tarzan novel... TARZAN OF THE APES!

The copyright hassles had been taken care of, and Ballantine Books had just gotten all the ***"Tarzan"*** novels (including two new ones) into print. So, following Charlton's lead, Gold Key began a series of adaptations of the original books that were, in the main, excellent.

Issue #155 saw DuBois and Manning presenting the Tarzan origin story for the first time in his own title. It was trimmed and jampacked to get it into a single issue, but it was a faithful and successful retelling of the original. Jane Porter, now a blonde, was reintroduced, and Tarzan ended the issue vowing to seek her out though she be half a world away. The next issue adapted the second novel, and Tarzan completed his quest, encountering the villainous Nikolas Rokoff, a new version of La (now a sexy jungle princess who bore little resemblance to the Marsh version), and, once again, Jane Porter, whom he married. Finally, continuity was returning to ***TARZAN!*** The third issue saw Tarzan's son Korak born and Rokoff sent to his infernal reward; and, in issue #158, the "origin story" of Korak, Tarzan's son grew to young manhood and took his wife, Meriem. Even though the Burroughs novels had to be cleansed of some violence for the kiddie trade, these were still remarkable adaptations.

Then, in the next three issues, Manning and DuBois stretched out and produced the best adaptation of all, a 72-page ***TARZAN AND THE JEWELS OF OPAR***. Burroughs novels are essentially pulps and hard to fit into 24 comic book pages at a shot. After this effort, practically all adaptations would be run over two issues (and even then, they required a bit of cutting). At the same time, ***TARZAN*** had become a TV show in 1966, which required adapta-

IF I TIME THIS RIGHT...
AT THE HIGHEST POINT OF HIS SWING, THE APE-MAN SUDDENLY BENDS DOUBLE! HIS KNIFE FLASHES...
WITH ALL HIS MIGHTY STRENGTH AND SWIFTNESS, TARZAN BATTLES TO AVOID THE NO-DONS BLADE, AS THEIR GREAT SWINGING ARCS INTERCEPT!
NOW—!!
From TARZAN newspaper strip. ©1972 Edgar Rice Burroughs, Inc.

Manning's newspaper *TARZAN*: "...some of the best..."

tions of the program in the comic by Doug Wildey (with cover photos of Ron Ely) sandwiched between Manning stories in a weird double-bind. Thankfully, the TV show died, and, after four "T.V. Adventures" issues, we could get back to business.

Manning kept up the pace through five more adaptations, not counting the ***JUNGLE TALES*** done by Alberto Giolitti. Then, the Burroughs moguls, wishing to spice up the flagging Tarzan comic strip, snatched Manning and put him to work in a larger arena. Once freed from the restrictions of Gold Key adaptations, Manning produced some of the best Tarzan strips of all time and certainly some of the best adventure strips of the 1960s and 1970s (he recently left the Ape Man to do the ***STAR WARS*** strip). When DC reprinted some of Manning's Sunday strips in their giant-sized ***"Super-Spectaculars"*** in the 1970s, they even put ***Manning's*** comic book work to shame.

After a one-issue lull in which the origin story was reprinted, Gold Key put Doug Wildey to work as Manning's replacement. Although no Manning, Wildey ***was*** a very good comic book artist and turned out a worthy adaptation of ***TARZAN AT THE EARTH'S CORE***, in which Tarzan met David Innes for the first time. (Innes only appeared in a cameo with his face averted; Gold Key didn't have the adaptation rights!) Wildey continued for some six more issues and adapted three more novels.

Mike Royer followed Wildey on the saga, and never really could seem right for the job with his cartoony figures. Gold Key continued its adaptations through ***TARZAN AND THE LOST EMPIRE*** and did a little-known ERB juvenile, ***THE TARZAN TWINS***. Then, paying adaptation fees to the Burroughs company, Gold Key returned to original Tarzan tales. The stories were as uninspired as the art.

TARZAN was going downhill. Gold Key knew it, the fans knew it, and, most importantly, Edgar Rice Burroughs, Inc. knew it. The company announced that Gold Key's option would not be renewed after 1971, and DC and Marvel eagerly jumped at the bait. As a parting gesture, Gold Key did a one-issue adaptation of ***TARZAN AND THE LION MAN*** in their final ***TARZAN***. The company that had published ***TARZAN*** comics for almost 25 years quietly passed the torch.

They passed it to DC, who responded with the best Tarzan since Russ Manning's.

Joe Kubert was to be writer, artist, and editor—the new master. DC, whose books were then 48-pages-for-a-quarter, knew how to do Tarzan well. They began their series with a four-part origin retelling which could compete with Manning's version artistically and was far ahead of it, scriptwise. Kubert's Tarzan was unlike his predecessors', a change that can only be compared to what Neal Adams did to Batman in 1968. His Ape Man was a savage, brooding fury, fully capable of dealing death, at one with the elements, and prone to defeat as well as victory. Dramatically, it was by ***far*** the most effective Tarzan.

DC's ***TARZAN*** soon shrank to 32 pages (as did the rest of their line) and instituted original stories and adaptations of the ***JUNGLE TALES***. Kubert's gritty realism, carried over from the DC war books, made these stories the best new efforts the series had ever seen. Once, he even integrated whole sequences from an old Tarzan Sunday strip (by Hal Foster) into a new story. The art break was immediately discernable, but the fact that Kubert could still pull it off is a testimony to his artistry. The only continuing character in the series was Tarzan, more fearsome than he had been in 26 years.

Later, Kubert rendered a five-part ***RETURN OF TARZAN***, the best DC ***TARZAN*** issues of all. Lo was the only Burroughs character to return in an original tale, in which she turned out to have a huge, 12-foot-tall bestial brother named Rokar. More than any other adapter, Kubert knew ***what made a good story***. The same insight that had kept Sgt. Rock going for over a decade was applied to Tarzan and worked perfectly.

The ***TARZAN*** book expanded to 100-page ***"Super-Spectacular"*** size, as did many DC titles of the time, for six issues. Since this necessitated an armload of reprints each issue to fill up space, and since DC had never been very big on jungle characters beforehand,

HEAD LOWERED, THE APE-MAN LEAPS FORWARD FROM HIS BULGING MUSCLED NECK, TARZAN GIVES A CHALLENGE...
"DOES THIS MIGHTY TARZAN FEAR ANYONE... THAT HE NEEDS HIS LONG TOOTH TO DO BATTLE?!!"
From TARZAN #202. ©1972 Edgar Rice Burroughs, Inc.

Kubert's *TARZAN*: "...a savage, brooding fury..."

LANDING ASTRIDE THE GREAT CAT, TARZAN LOCKS HIS POWERFUL ARMS ABOUT THE TORAK'S NECK...WHILE FOAM-FLECKED TEETH SNAP JUST OUT OF REACH...

A sample of Franc Reyes' finished artwork over Joe Kubert's breakdowns on the first comics adaptation of *TARZAN AND THE CASTAWAYS*.

From TARZAN #242. ©1974 Edgar Rice Burroughs, Inc.

quite a bit of scurrying had to be done to find something, ***anything*** to put in the ***TARZAN*** book! The Ape Man found himself sharing space with Detective Chimp, Rex the Wonder Dog (well, at least they were ***animals***), Congo Bill, Bomba (retitled Simba—DC had lost adaptation rights!), and a spate of old jungle-oriented stories from ***MY GREATEST ADVENTURE***. Korak's title was temporarily cancelled and he moved into his father's book as a back-feature, but this forced the Mike Kaluta-drawn (and excellent) ***"Carson of Venus"*** strip to bite the dust after a single issue. Russ Manning's strip reprints were the stars of each book. A year later, DC cancelled the experiment and shrank the books back to 32 pages. Korak moved out, back to his own book. Kubert, in the meantime, had done some original stories and an adaptation of ***TARZAN AND THE LION MAN***.

About this time, paralysis began to set in. Kubert began doing only basic layouts for a new artist, Frank Reyes. Reyes was quite good, but more polished and less savage than Kubert. After two issues of Manning strip reprints, Kubert and Reyes did the first comic version of ***TARZAN AND THE CASTAWAYS*** (unlike Gold Key's, DC's ***TARZAN*** adaptations skipped around a lot). Reyes was replaced by Rudy Florese, who gave way to Nestor Redondo, who did another Burroughs tale, ***"The Jungle Murders."*** Cracks were showing, but the wall was still in one piece.

Kubert's last three issues saw him trading licks with Florese and Redondo on another virgin property, ***TARZAN AND THE CHAMPION***. #249 marked the end of Kubert's distinguished stint on ***TARZAN***.

Then Joe Orlando took over as editor and promptly converted it into just another typical DC 1976 comic. Gerry Conway and Jose Garcia-Lopez began a long, drogged-out, none-too-good adaptation of ***TARZAN THE UNTAMED***. In #254, Conway shared honors with David Kraft. Then, both were replaced by Denny O'Neil, and Rudy Florese took over the art. That was the last issue, as O'Neil was forced to forget the pacing of the original novel and just pulled like hell to get the whole thing tied up and over with, because DC's ***TARZAN*** was down the tubes and everybody knew it. The last two issues were Kubert reprints. ERB, Inc. took up their marbles and left.

They didn't have far to go; they just went across town to Marvel Comics and gave the property to a team who had done a bangup job on ***CONAN*** for some years... Roy Thomas and John Buscema. Surely, ERB, Inc. must have thought, they could do a better job than DC's floundering post-Kubert teams! And, initially, they did.

The problem was that with ***CONAN***, Thomas and Buscema were less pressed for space. They were essentially adapting short stories (excepting ***CONAN THE CONQUEROR***, which took 187 pages and a year and a half to tell), and, moreover, stories were often serialized. Tarzan, on the other hand, was a character (save only for the ***JUNGLE TALES***) only found in novels. Thus, unable to cut corners as well as their predecessors, Thomas' and Buscema's first effort, ***TARZAN AND THE JEWELS OF OPAR***, stretched out over ***eleven issues*** (with two Jungle Tales adapted along the way)!

Afterwards, Thomas and David Kraft traded off adapting different stories from ***JUNGLE TALES*** for three issues. Then Kraft took over as regular writer—after Thomas left over a dispute with ERB, Inc.—and began a long, involved story, heavy with political overtones, which took Tarzan back to Pellucidar. The tale did have a fascinating villain, one Abdul Alhazred (shades of Lovecraft!), but there wasn't much else to recommend it. Somewhere along the line Bill Mantlo and Sal Buscema took over the writing and art chores, and continued on after the Pellucidar tale ran its course.

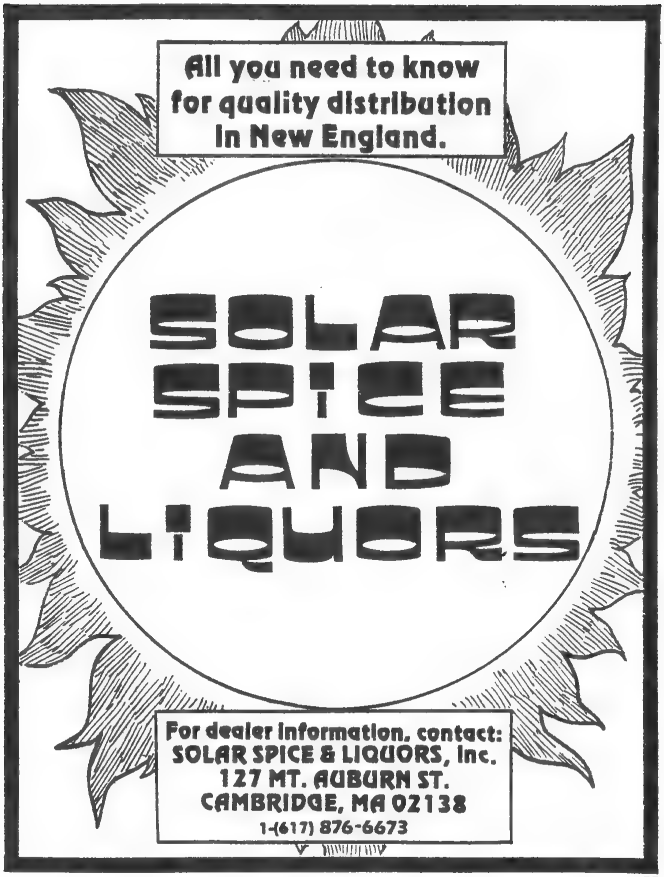
Mantlo, as able a scripter as Denny O'Neil when he tries, wasn't at home with Tarzan and it showed. The next six-issue sequence saw Tarzan kidnapped and taken to America by Chicago gangsters, freed by a black mobster straight out of ***SNAFT***, and climbing a skyscraper ***a la KING KONG***. The book read more like ***IRON MAN*** than a Burroughs creation. The book was selling well, but Marvel's option was cancelled. Their third ***TARZAN ANNUAL***, in 1979, was the last ***TARZAN*** comic book published in America.

Since then, Tarzan has been published overseas by ERB, Inc. itself, but no new ***TARZAN***s are forthcoming in the U.S. Of all the comic companies in business today, only Archie, Harvey and Warren have not handled Tarzan, and it's quite doubtful that any of them ever will. Perhaps Burroughs, Inc. will decide to release their books in the States, but until they do, Tarzan comics remain a thing of the past.

The ***TARZAN*** comics offer an interesting series of contrasts. They remain the only comics on record to actually show how different artist and writer teams would handle the adaptation of a single given story over a long period of time (excepting the perennial retellings of super-hero origins); in fact, certain sequences from ***JUNGLE TALES*** have been retold five times in comics! ***TARZAN*** kept its namesake character alive for over thirty years with more original stories than any medium except for newspaper strips. For thirty years, the book enjoyed excellent sales. There were many issues of what might seem like hack work, but quite a few of the books were excellent, and that's all that one can hope from any comic.

Somewhere, Tarzan still swings. That's enough to ***keep*** one hoping.

From Williams Publishing British book. ©1973 Edgar Rice Burroughs, Inc.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No Fan for this FLASH

In which Kurt Olsson, who reviewed the changes in *THE FLASH* since its last editorial changeover in *FEATURE #9* examines the speedster's adventures since the return of original *"Flash"* penciller Carmine Infantino.

by Kurt Olsson

In comics, the color of a super-hero's costume often serves to reflect not only the hero's character, but also the direction in which the creative team wishes the hero's title to take. Just as The Batman's somber-hued costume makes him an excellent candidate for stories rich in mood and concerned with the darker side of the human psyche, the Flash's vibrant red and yellow track suit makes him a perfect opponent for relatively light-hearted villains like Captain Cold and the Trickster.

The Flash's success, though, unlike most of today's comics fare, hinges on color—on whether or not the art and stories are colorful enough. Let's face it: a world where a super-hero like the Flash can run faster than the speed of time is more difficult for a reader to believe in than the relatively more mundane world of a character like The Batman. The key to the Flash is to make his high speed antics appear super, but not *so* super that reader credibility is lost. Rather than toning down the Flash's powers in an attempt to make him fit more neatly into our perception of reality, however, some ***FLASH*** writers have made the Flash's world a world of staggering extremes, so that a hero like the Flash doesn't seem all that fantastic because he's seen in the same world as incredible villains like the Rainbow Raider. Straddling these two extremes, then, requires a conscious realization that such pitfalls exist, as well as sufficient talent to avoid them. By having the Flash battle colorful (but not *too* colorful) villains in colorful (but identifiable) situations, writers like Cary Bates and Gardner Fox have been able to make an improbable character like the Flash seem more believable, and in the Flash saga which ended in ***FLASH #303***, Cary Bates, with the able

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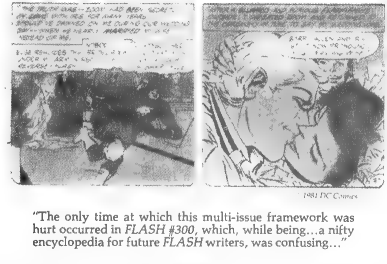
assistance of Carmine Infantino and Bob Smith, not only accomplished this, but also skillfully delivered a seven-part story complete with a satisfying conclusion and revealed more concerning the personalities of the Flash and his Rogues Gallery than was previously known.

Part of the success of the seven-issue sub-plot centering around Barry Allen and the Top (in his guise as Barry's father) lies in Bates' concerns as a writer. Instead of allowing the Top sub-plot to run roughshod through ***THE FLASH***, Bates introduced the menace of the Top slowly, letting the suspense build. In ***FLASH #297-299***, Bates shows the Top's evil persona only twice shining through his facade as Barry's father, Henry Allen, while concentrating most of those particular stories' energy on the Flash's major antagonists of each story (including Captain Cold, Shade, and the Rainbow Raider). Later, as the sub-plot neared its climax (but before the reader learned that the Top's ghost had taken over the form of Henry Allen), Bates made the reader more and more aware of the fact there was a reason Barry's father was acting so odd, but never gave an explanation—as seen in the sequence in which Frank Curtis sees Henry Allen making "nice-nice" (as the later put it to Barry) to the same young redhead mentioned earlier but neither Curtis nor the reader is given enough information to deduce the true horror of the situation (unless one had been reading the ***FLASH*** long enough to discover that it was Roscoe Dillon who was playing "Deadman" with the form of Henry Allen)—and waited until the final segment, ***FLASH #303***, to reveal the lengthy explanation for an evil Henry Allen.

In fact, one principal reason for the success of the seven-issue plotline may be that Bates didn't make the sub-plot central to any but the last two stories. In the seven-issue span, every issue is a complete story with a beginning, middle, and end. So, after reading ***FLASH #301***, the reader wasn't left dangling with an unfinished story, but the sub-plot concerning Barry's father probably was enough to hook the reader into buying the next issue (especially since in ***FLASH #303***, Henry Allen is seen fondling a voluptuous redhead, instead of sitting at his wife's bedside). Hence, in issues like ***FLASH #301***, the reader is given the best of both worlds—a single issue story set in a multi-issue framework. The only time at which this multi-issue framework was hurt occurred in ***FLASH #300*** which, while being a very good psychological tale and a nifty encyclopedia for future ***FLASH*** writers, was confusing because one expected a sub-plot which had been building for months, like the Top sub-plot, to reach its peak in a huge anniversary story. ***FLASH #300*** didn't do that, and maybe my confusion lay in my reading too many "epic" Marvel anniversary stories. Oh well...

Another reason for the ***FLASH***'s recent success is that, as any ***FLASH*** reader or writer can attest, making a ***FLASH*** story work is much simpler by virtue of the presence of the Flash's cache of super-foes, because the

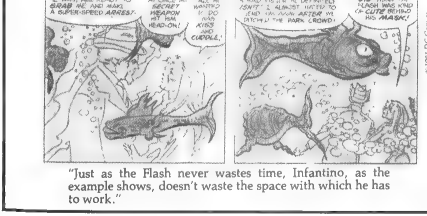


"The only time at which this multi-issue framework was hurt occurred in *FLASH #300*, which, while being...a nifty encyclopedia for future *FLASH* writers, was confusing..."

Scarlet Speedster has always had an off-beat collection of odd-ball enemies, and part of the enjoyment derived from ***FLASH #297-300***, in particular, is the manner in which Bates builds his stories around the Flash's Rogues Gallery. Again, color comes into play, because all the Flash's villains are colorful in one way or another. But a colorful costume does not a hero make, to paraphrase the well-worn phrase, and the personalities of the various Flash-foes are colorful as well. Gimmicks which villains like Captain Cold use can be intriguing in their first few appearances, but the reader can see examples of the villain's gimmickry for only so long before he or she overdoses and loses interest in the villain altogether. Bates, though, has learned how to make a villain's gimmicks of secondary interest to the reader by molding his villains into interesting characters with motives (albeit, at times, simple ones). Captain Cold, for instance, as his dramatic posturings indicate, is a super-villain because he is a "love-sick romantic" (as the Flash puts it at the end of ***FLASH #297***), and he feels he must live up to the swashbuckling image he has of himself. The Golden Glider, on the other hand, is a killer because she feels she must have revenge on the Flash for his part in the death of her lover, the Top.

Moreover, Bates has realized that character is revealed through action. A good example of Bates accomplishing this aim is in ***FLASH #298***. In this issue, the villain Shade bumps into a blind man, who is begging for money. The Shade complies, filling the beggar's cup full of quarters. Shade's action not only is ironic, but it also shows that Shade, despite his villainy, is compassionate enough to feel pity for a man who has to live his whole life in shadows (but unlike The Shade, unwillingly).

Add to these examples speech patterns which are unique for each character, and one sees the outline of good, well-thought-out characterization. In ***FLASH #298***, for instance, Shade's higher level of diction is in character (on page 15, Shade utters "Never let it be said that The Shade was one ever to succumb to predictability," a contorted phrase one would never expect Mirror Master to use) especially in view of his taste in clothing (top hat and black tailored tuxedo), while both the Top and the Golden Glider's frequent use of sexual colloquialisms, like "babycakes"



"Just as the Flash never wastes time, Infantino, as the example shows, doesn't waste the space with which he has to work."

and "sweetness," reveals their relationship is based mostly upon physical attraction, which in turn weakens the depth of their relationship and ensures the reader's feeling less empathy for them.

In like manner, Bates has begun to let the reader see the new Barry Allen, the Barry Allen who has finally come to grips with his wife's death. While not the vindictive manhunter of the Andru-edited ***FLASH*** stories, Barry (and his super-speeding alter ego) is much easier to get riled than he used to be. In ***FLASH #297***, the Flash angrily voices his doubt concerning Captain Cold's latest altruistic leanings, just as he expresses the same doubt (just as angrily) when the Shade suggests teaming up to fight the Rainbow Raider. Even as Barry Allen, he is more hot-tempered than he once was, as evidenced when he angrily disavows the proof Frank gives him of his father fooling around. While moodier than he once was in the days Iris was alive, Barry is more confident of himself, and is thoughtful and sure in his actions. He takes his temporary firing by his boss calmly, and he has no real qualms about revealing his secret identity to his father. Iris' death seems to have sobered both Barry Allen and the Flash, but Bates shows it hasn't destroyed him as a man and a hero.

While Bates has been delving more deeply into his super-powered characters in this seven-issue stint, he has seemingly forgotten the supporting cast he had been developing in earlier post-Andru edited issues. Since ***FLASH #297***, Barry's only love interest since his wife's death, Fiona Webb, has been mentioned only once (by Nora Allen) and never seen, and Barry's neighbors, Mack and Troy, haven't been seen at all. Their importance in the Top sub-plot may have been negligible, but that doesn't excuse Bates' forgetting about them altogether.

Despite this negligence, Bates, by fleshing out his hero and villains and allowing them to change to reveal facets of their characters, has prevented them from becoming humdrum. This mission to prevent the Flash from falling into a rut of predictability hasn't been shouldered by Bates alone. Since returning to DC and ***FLASH***, Carmine Infantino has not only produced some fine work, but he has also changed his art style such that the flashiness of the Flash is allowed to come through. ***FLASH***, in the past six years, has been drawn by competent storytellers like Irv Novick and Don Heck, but neither of these artists was ever really able to capture the sheer awesomeness of the Flash's super-speed hijinx like Infantino did—in fact, at times, the Flash's inventive uses of his super-speed seemed almost pedestrian when rendered by Novick, Saviuk, and Heck. Infantino, though, upon his return to the title he pioneered in the 1960 s, has seemingly taken over from where he left off. The Flash's high-speed antics are awesome again, and Infantino's storytelling is exactly what the doctor ordered. Page 11 of ***FLASH #302*** is a good example. Nothing fancy, but Infantino juxtaposes the scene with Henry Allen and the Golden Glider with fish (ugly fish at that) in an aquarium (a comment on the villainous pair's relationship?), cuts to Frank Curtis spying on them, then cuts to Barry washing dishes at super-speed right as his father enters the door. Just as the Flash never wastes time, Infantino, as the example shows, doesn't waste the space with which he has to work.

In addition, Infantino obviously understands that the Flash exists in a world of bright colors, not in the muted grays and blacks of the Batman or the conservative robin-egg blue and brick-red of Superman. For example, in ***FLASH #297***, Infantino draws the Allens' car in a simple, loose style in the first few panels Barry Allen's parents are seen, then, as the car starts to careen down a mountainside, Infantino makes use of his sketchy style to show the wrecked car (almost symbolically) twisted in ways no metal can be twisted. Coupled with Smith's sparse use of heavy blacks and light ink strokes, Infantino's work lets the colorist—in this case Gene D'Angelo—contrast the dark blue of the car's twisted hulk with the fleshy pink of the seemingly lifeless hand of Nora Allen—a powerful example of how Infantino, with his stylistic approach to comics illustration, has made expert use of allowing for color in four-color comics.

So despite a few problems, ***FLASH #297-303***, as Roscoe Dillon might put it, have been hard to "top," and in a three-year span which has seen confusing, over-blown multi-issue epics, the restraint and simple good craftsmanship shown by Bates *et al* throughout the seven-issue "Top" story is a breath of fresh air. Hopefully, readers can look forward to more of the same from this ***FLASH***-team in issues to come.

NEXT ISSUE:

"Animated Chatter" on the ***HEAVY METAL MOVIE***

Peter Sanderson's "End Notes" on WARNER BROTHERS ANIMATION

"Super-Team Spirit" on the all-original ***X-MEN***

A dynamic cover by KERRY GAMMILL spotlights our Interview with ***MARY JO DUFFY***

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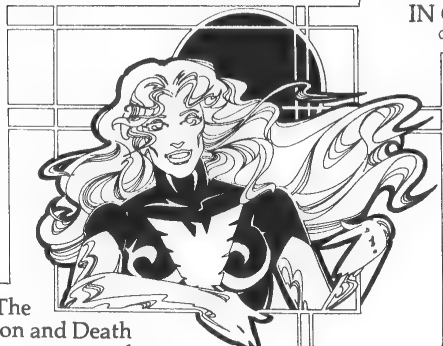
Chapter Two



The Degeneration and Death of DARK PHOENIX

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by Margaret O'Connell

As was demonstrated at length in the first installment of this article (***COMICS FEATURE* #12/13**), the Marvel comics of the past few years have increasingly featured superheroines who are extremely powerful and aggressive, and, as a seemingly inescapable by-product of these qualities, prone to potentially lethal fits of power-madness and wanton destruction. In 1980 alone, Marvel prominently featured as guest-stars such formidable female characters as the cosmic-powered but dangerously trigger-happy Her (female counterpart of Him, better known as Warlock, she guest-starred in ***MARVEL TWO-IN-ONE* #61-63**) and Snowbird, a shape-shifting member of the Canadian superteam Alpha Flight whose extreme viciousness in her magically-assumed guise of a white wolverine enabled her to defeat the virtually-invulnerable Wendigo in battle singlehanded—a feat previously accomplished only by The Hulk.

In addition, the same year saw the introduction in her own monthly comic of a new super-heroine billed as The Savage She-Hulk. Portrayed in her Stan Lee-scripted origin story as the embodiment of liberated lawyer Jennifer Walters' power fantasies of solving all the problems of the world singlehandedly—by sheer brute force if necessary—the She-Hulk was toned down somewhat after regular scripter David Anthony Kraft took over with the book's second issue. But although the She-Hulk is no longer presented as a sort of ruthless She-Punisher who is sorely tempted to kill criminals and terrorize anyone who gets in her way, she still regards her awesome Hulkish super-abilities less as gifts which it is her duty to use altruistically for the benefit of humanity (as more conventional aspirants to super-herodom do) than as a means to the end of escaping from the problems and responsibilities of everyday life by tripping out on the near-limitless power which enables her to gratify her every selfish whim.

Last but not least, 1980 marked the long-awaited conclusion of the ***"Dark Phoenix"*** saga set in motion with the reincarnation of Marvel Girl as Phoenix in ***X-MEN* #101** (Oct. 1976) four years before. The depressing resolution of this storyline depicted the previously morally irreproachable Jean Grey callously causing the deaths of five billion sentient beings by consuming the sun of their planet in a fit of madness induced by her virtually infinite Phoenix power, and finally committing suicide because it was the only way she could ensure that she would not succumb to the urge to perpetrate further such atrocities. This spectacularly unhappy ending had obvious and disturbing implications about women's ability to handle power. The fact that Phoenix was not only the only female hero Marvel had ever had who attained a cosmic power level (at least until the (male) Paragon, previously seen in ***HULK ANNUAL* #6**, metamorphosed into Her, as told in a flashback in ***MARVEL TWO-IN-ONE* #61**, March 1980), but also the only one of several Marvel heroes who at one time or another possessed such cosmic power to be portrayed as horribly and irredeemably corrupted by it, inevitably suggests to the reader that these two qualities unique to Phoenix among cosmic-powered super-heroes—her femaleness and her susceptibility to corruption—are inextricably linked.

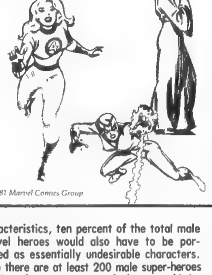
On a grander scale, the continuing gross under-representation of women in comics, especially as super-heroines, causes the personalities and behavior of the few female super-characters who do exist to be interpreted as representative of their entire sex in a way that the actions of individual male characters are not. The fact that the total number of super-heroines at Marvel, as elsewhere, is still only about one-fifth to one-sixth the number of male heroes, makes the objectively rather small number of female characters who engage in conduct clearly unbecoming a super-hero assume a much greater proportional significance than the misbehavior of an exactly equal number of male rotten apples in the barrel would. Four callously hyper-aggressive power junkies may not sound like much, but since there are only about forty Marvel super-heroines at all (see accompanying list), that means ten percent of all Marvel super-heroines are hyperaggressive power junkies. Thus, in order for there to be a true proportional equivalence between the number of male and female so-called good guys presented as having strongly negative

COMPLETE LIST OF MARVEL HEROINES AND SUPER-HEROINES

Compiled by Margaret O'Connell

SUPER-HEROINES

1) Moondragon
2) Mantis
3) Wasp
4) Black Widow
5) Jocasta
6) Ms. Marvel
7) Scarlet Witch
8) Miss America (Liberty Legion)
9) Spitfire (Invaders)
10) Venus (from Marvel's precursor Timely Comics. Also appeared in ***WHAT IF #9, CHAMPIONS #1-3,*** and ***SUB-MARINER #57.***)
11) Hellcat
12) Valkyrie
13) Red Guardian
14) Clea
15) Marvel Girl (Phoenix)
16) Storm
17) Polaris
18) Sprite (Kitty Pryde)
19) Snowbird (Alpha Flight)
20) Aurora (Alpha Flight)
21) Darkstar (Champions)
22) Madame Medusa (Inhumans)
23) Crystal (Inhumans)
24) Thundra



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25) Sue Storm (Fantastic Four)
26) Thena (Eternals)
27) Sersi (Eternals)
28) Sif (Thor's girlfriend)
29) Hildegarde (Asgardian)
30) Nikki (Guardians of the Galaxy)
30) Namorita (Sub-Mariner's cousin)
32) The Cat/Tigra the Were-Woman
33) She-Hulk
34) Dazzler
35) Spider-Woman
36) Sabra (Israeli super-heroine who recently appeared in ***HULK***)
37) Mockingbird (a.k.a. Barbara "Bobbi" Morse of S.H.I.E.L.D., the Huntress. Appeared in ***MARVEL TEAM-UP.***)
38) Gamora (from ***WARLOCK***—"the most dangerous woman in the universe")
39) Hecate (appeared in ***MS. MARVEL #12-13***)
40) Lady Cicilia (Micronauts)
41) Jennifer Kale (sorceress in ***MAN-THING***)

late addition:

42) Siryn (Banshee's daughter)

HEROINES

1) Shanna the She-Devil
2) Misty Knight
3) Colleen Wing
4) Bethany Cabe
5) Ling McPherson
6) Marionette (Princess Mari)
7) Princess Leia Organa
8) Slug
9) Jezebel (Bug's girlfriend)
10) Red Sonja (barbarian)
11) Rachel Van Helsing (Dracula Hunters)
12) Countess Valentina Allegro de Fontaine
13) Sharon Carter
14) Peggy Carter

OF DUBIOUS GENDER

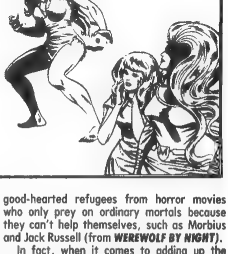
1) Her (formerly the—male—Paragon)
2) Aleta (Starhawk's female alter ego)

OF DUBIOUS GOOD-GUY-NESS

1) Satana
2) Lilith, Dracula's daughter
3) Belit (barbarian)
4) Ardina (Silver Surfer's girlfriend)
5) Karnilla, the Norn Queen
6) Whitney Frost (Madame Masque—presently insane)
7) Elektra (Daredevil's old flame—shows dubious morality)

UNCATEGORIZABLE FORCE OF NATURE

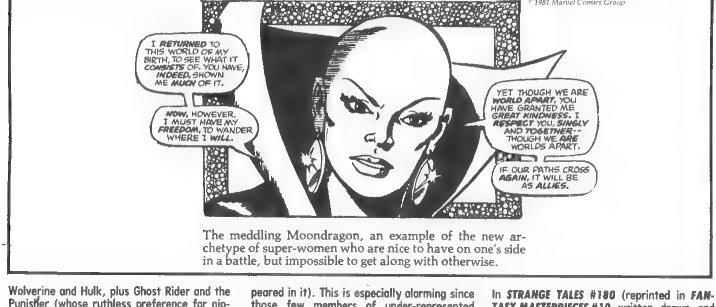
1) Mother Earth (***DOCTOR STRANGE***)



characteristics, ten percent of the total male Marvel heroes would also have to be portrayed as essentially undesirable characters. Since there are at least 200 male super-heroes at Marvel, ten percent of them would be twenty—twenty "heroes" as unworthy of the name as Wolverine, or at least The Hulk. Not a pretty picture.

Obviously, there are ***not*** currently twenty Marvel super-heroes, as opposed to heroines, who immediately spring to mind when the subject of good guys who act more like bad guys is raised, especially if one adheres scrupulously to a strict definition of the word "super-hero." This immediately excludes barbarians like Conan, (formerly) licensed-to-kill super-spies like Nick Fury, macho science fiction types like Starlord who are determined to shed their image as the sissy of the spaceways, and last but not least, basically good-hearted refugees from horror movies who only prey on ordinary mortals because they can't help themselves, such as Morbius and Jack Russell (from ***WEREWOLF BY NIGHT***).

In fact, when it comes to adding up the number of male super-people who are portrayed as being the opposite of admirable characters, despite their theoretical allegiance to the side of the angels, the only clear-cut examples I can find are the above-mentioned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I, RETURNED TO THIS WORLD OF MY BIRTH, TO SEE WHAT IT CONTAINS OF, YOU HAVE, INDEED, SHOWN ME MUCH OF IT.
WOW, HOWEVER, I MUST HAVE MY FREEDOM, TO WANDER WHERE I WILL.
YET THOUGH WE ARE WORLD APART, YOU HAVE GRANTED ME GREAT KINDNESS. I RESPECT YOU. SINGLY AND TOGETHER-- THOUGH WE ARE WORLDS APART.
IF OUR PATHS CROSS AGAIN, IT WILL BE AS ALLIES.

The meddling Moondragon, an example of the new archetype of super-women who are nice to have on one's side in a battle, but impossible to get along with otherwise.

Wolverine and Hulk, plus Ghost Rider and the Punisher (whose ruthless preference for nipping future crimes in the bud by eliminating the perpetrators permanently, demonstrating relatively little concern about protecting the specific innocent people who are endangered by crimes now, renders their categorization as super-heroes extremely dubious). An additional two possibilities are Quicksilver and the Sub-Mariner, who were sometimes (though not recently) presented as reprehensibly bigoted and/or irrationally violent and criminally reckless with human life, at least when the life in question was an enemy's.

However, if we restrict ourselves solely to Marvel super-heroes who have been consistently portrayed in recent years as basically negative role models, Namor and Quicksilver immediately drop off the list, since both of them have pretty much reformed lately, albeit in Quicksilver's case only with the forcible assistance of the meddling Moondragon. This leaves us with just four male "heroes" whose conduct is persistently deplorable. This figure is exactly the same as the actual number of negatively-portrayed Marvel super-heroines, but is much smaller in terms of percentages—two percent of the total males, as opposed to ten percent of the total females.

To top it all off, judging by the marginal sales of Ghost Rider's own comic,- the only characters from this rogues' gallery of reprehensible male heroes who are at all familiar to even the most casual comics readers are the Hulk and Wolverine, whose representation of his gender is diluted by the fact that he regularly appears as merely one member of a team which includes at least three other men who are much more morally acceptable. When it comes to the heroines, on the other hand, there are virtually no other Marvel super-heroines as instantly recognizable to readers as Phoenix and the She-Hulk, who as of 1980 comprised two-thirds of all Marvel heroines who were then headlining their own books (since Phoenix utterly dominated ***X-MEN*** whenever she appeared in it). This is especially alarming since those few members of under-represented groups who achieve high visibility tend to be regarded less as individuals in their own right than as typical representatives of the group as a whole. Thus, presenting two of the tiny handful of instantly recognizable Marvel heroines as savagely ruthless power junkies is analogous to what would happen if the scripters portrayed, say, Power Man and the Black Panther as destructive menaces, leaving the Falcon as the only morally upright black Marvel super-hero who had ever starred or co-starred in his own book. The indirect political statement thus conveyed might be unforeseen and unintentional, but the effect on the average reader's perception of the group as a whole would be essentially the same as if the comics creators had deliberately set out to suggest that most women/blacks/etc. are irrational and violent and can't be trusted to handle power properly.

Such a suggestion could only be reinforced by an examination of the significant differences between ***X-MEN*** scripter Chris Claremont's portrayal of Jean Grey's behavior after becoming the cosmic-powered Phoenix and the more positive presentation given Marvel's other, earlier heroes of similar godlike power, all of whom were male. These differences in the implied attitude the reader is to take toward the cosmic character in question are astonishingly unjustified in a number of cases, since several of the male counterparts of Dark Phoenix also have blood on their hands, though none of them matches their body count of five billion.

For example, Warlock, one of Marvel's most noted and revered cosmic heroes, deliberately kills or expresses the intention of killing various opponents on a number of occasions, displaying reluctance or repentance over doing so only because of the effect it has on him, not out of any recognition that taking a sentient being's life is a dreadful step no matter what the consequences or the respective merits of the killer and the person killed.

In ***STRANGE TALES #180*** (reprinted in ***FANTASY MASTERPIECES #10***, written, drawn, and just about everything else by Jim Starlin, like all the other installments of this Warlock character's saga), Warlock willingly looses his vampiric soul gem for the first time, self-righteously informing his victim, Judge Kraytor, that "Until meeting you, I feared that I might be interfering with those things that only the dark forces of Chaos and Order should meddle with!...Only now, upon discovering you, do I realize that this accursed gem upon my brow was sent to me by some power, beyond my comprehension, for a purpose! That purpose...to destroy evil such as yourself! Yes, I now realize that your kind are the ultimate in vileness, judging all but yourselves! So may whatever gods [there] be forgive me, for this day I join your ranks..." (p. 17). The moment the vampiric murder is accomplished, Adam Warlock recoils in shock and remorse—but for a rather peculiar reason: "Can't think...So many thoughts in my head...not mine! They're Kray-tor's thoughts...Not! Oh no! At last I understand! He truly believed...what he did...was just! I threatened his beliefs! In his mind...I was a villain! Even worse yet...by stealing his soul...I proved him right..." (p. 18). Shattered by this blow to his messianic self-image, the distressed Warlock slumps to the ground in a faint.

However, this experience, agonizing as it is, does not prevent him from deliberately unleashing his soul gem again in ***WARLOCK #11*** (reprinted in ***FANTASY MASTERPIECES #14***), when he, Thanos, Pip, and Gamora are attacked by the Magus' Death Squad. Urged by Thanos to use the gem to "drain the life-forces from these maggots so quickly that not even the Magus will be able to stop you [before you can go on to eliminate his existence by altering your own future]!", Warlock initially refuses—not because he has scruples about killing, but because of the peculiar backlash effect this particular murder method inevitably has upon him. "You don't under-

stand what it means to use this damnable gem!" the harried hero protests. "This jewel's victims don't die! Their souls are yanked from their bodies and come to rest within my mind, to torment me for ending their existence! I just can't use it again! No matter what happens!" (p. 29). However, eventually Thanos succeeds in convincing Warlock that he will suffer even worse mental anguish, not to mention guilt, if he doesn't use this quickest possible means to get to the time probe with which he can frustrate the genocidal designs of the Magus, his own future self. Once again, Adam recoils in horror as soon as he has unleashed the vampiric gem, exclaiming in stricken tones, "How?! No! I didn't mean..." "The hell you say!" the Magus retorts. "You've just proven yourself worthy of becoming that which I am! You spout sanctimonious trivia about honor and goodness...but to gain your own ends you've just slaughtered a room full of men!" (p. 31). But although there is a great deal of truth to this observation, its damning implications about Adam's own character are immediately lost in the shuffle. Assuming, that is, that they ever had any credibility in the first place, coming from a cosmic Hitler-cum-Torquemada who is presented throughout as being as unscrupulously evil as Adam Warlock is noble and good. At any rate, the Warlock/Magus confrontation is abruptly cut short at this point, as the tale quickly shifts its focus to Warlock's desperate self-sacrifice of travelling into the future and killing the Warlock of several months from now in order to prevent himself from ever becoming the Magus.

The question of murder arises once again in **WARLOCK #13** (June, 1976), but this time the golden-skinned space wanderer feels no remorse or regret at the prospect of killing not even for his own previous peculiar and selfish reasons. On the contrary, Warlock concludes quite cold-bloodedly that he must kill again in order to save the universe from

IS ALL CLEAR NOW? NO MR. NO MR.!
YES, I DO BEGIN TO UNDERSTAND EVEN THOUGH YOU SCHEMED TO TWIST THE TRUTH!
THEN YOU UNDERSTAND WHY YOU MUST ABANDON YOUR CRUSADE AGAINST ME!
YOU CANNOT FIGHT ME! I AM BYRDE! PAVING YOU ARE, PLUS ALL THE THINGS YOU HATE!
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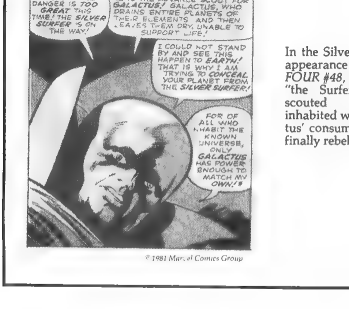
"Warlock appears to feel no regret at making [his] murderous decision, which Starlin presents as thoroughly justified and implies is the only possible way of preserving life throughout the universe."

destruction by the formidable Star Thief, who is snuffing out suns one by one by means of his vast psychic powers. Upon discovering what force is behind this phenomenon, Warlock immediately decides, "I cannot stop his mad destruction from here. His power is too great. My only hope is to destroy the power's source...! may be able to do that by allowing my soul gem to steal the life force of the Star Thief, which I can feel it already hungering ravenously for. For once, I'll not try to hold back my vampire jewel's gruesome appetites."

Warlock appears to feel no regret at making this murderous decision, which Starlin presents as thoroughly justified and implies is the only possible way of preserving life throughout the universe by eliminating the threat of the Star Thief. When Warlock is confronted by the Star Thief himself, who asks him telepathically why he is so determined to protect the "insignificant" beings who will die if the Thief's plan succeeds, the cosmic super-hero self-righteously replies, "Because as pitiful as they may be, they are still life, and as such are priceless beyond measure! While you, my powerful fiend, are obviously anti-life...for you clearly place no worth upon that one treasure that, once gone, can never be replaced...So I must fight you, Star Thief! For I am life and must defend life!" (pp. 16-7). This entire speech is delivered without a trace of irony or of awareness that no matter how little respect for life the Star Thief has, he, too, is a living being whom a self-proclaimed defender of life should logically display some qualms about killing, no matter how desperate the circumstances.


TRUE! BUT THE DANGER IS TOO GREAT THIS TIME! THE SILVER SURFER IS ON THE WAY!
HE IS THE ADVANCE SCOUT FOR GALACTUS! GALACTUS, WHO DRAINS ENTIRE PLANETS OF THEIR ELEMENTS AND THEN LEAVES THEM DRY, UNABLE TO SUPPORT LIFE!
I COULD NOT STAND BY AND SEE THIS HAPPEN TO EARTH! THAT IS WHY I AM TRYING TO CONCEAL YOUR PLANET FROM THE SILVER SURFER!
FOR OF ALL WHO INHABIT THE KNOWN UNIVERSE, ONLY GALACTUS HAS POWER ENOUGH TO MATCH MY OWN!!
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In the Silver Surfer's initial appearance in *FANTASTIC FOUR #48*, it is implied that "the Surfer had already scouted out several inhabited worlds for Galactus' consumption before he finally rebelled..."

The Silver Surfer, too, is not without guilt in this regard, despite his image as an improbably noble being far superior morally to us brutish humans. By agreeing to become Galactus' herald in order to save his own home planet of Zenn-La, the Surfer was knowingly assuming the role of accomplice before the fact to the destruction of countless worlds, at least some of which were likely to be inhabited. In fact, in the original version of the Silver Surfer's first appearance, it was implied that the Surfer had already scouted out several inhabited worlds for Galactus' consumption before he finally rebelled at the prospect of helping his master to destroy Earth.

BUT, WHY DOTH MY HEAD IN THIS MANNER ACHE??
WHAT HEAVY CLOUD SEEMS SUDDEN LIFTED FROM UPON MY TROUBLED BRAIN?
THE WARRIOR MADNESS HATH POSSESSED ME!
I STRUCK IN UNREASONING ANGER... I HEEDED NOT.. I PITIED NOT--
LESS WORTHY THAN MY FOE WAS I!
IT CANNOT BE... IT MUST NOT BE--
AND YET I KNOW THE TRUTH OF IT--
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Thor's bout with Warrior Madness: "In this story, at least, the hero's murderous intent is not condoned by a scripter's implication that as long as such a godlike being's intentions are basically good, he can exercise life or death power over others with impunity."

Finally, although Thor has never been implicated in the actual death of an opponent, in ***THOR* #166** (July, 1969, by Stan Lee and Jack Kirby), he was overcome by berserker rage while battling Him (who had kidnapped Sif to make her his mate) and would have killed him if the gravely-wounded future Warlock had not hastily sealed himself in his unbreachable protective cocoon. In this story, at least, the hero's murderous intent is not condoned by a scripter's implication that as long as such a godlike being's intentions are basically good, he can exercise life or death power over others with impunity. Instead, Odin is called in to explain the serious nature of Thor's crime and to provide assurance that it will not go unpunished: "In battle fair, him who hath fallen must be granted leave to make surrender! Only the affliction of warrior madness may alter such decision! Warrior madness...most forbidden malady of all! Any who be guilty of warrior madness must pay the penalty! Yea...even if he be son of the All-Father Odin!" (p. 14). The penalty in-question turns out to be going on a quest to find Galactus and discover his origin, a mission which the apprehensive Thor anticipates will require "an age" (***THOR* #168**, p. 14). However, in reality the repentant Thunder God is lucky enough to encounter Galactus almost immediately after despondently setting out into what he imagines will be a prolonged exile from everything he cares about.

It should be noted that in those instances where the arrogant and ruthless behavior of one of the male cosmic super-heroes is explicitly acknowledged to be inappropriate and morally unjustified, it is still possible for him to be restored to virtue by repenting and resolving not to repeat the offense, performing some good work to make up for his error, or at least having some worthy higher purpose in mind—an end which allegedly justifies whatever dubious means he may resort to. No such restoration to the fold is possible for Jean Grey, who is ultimately revealed to have been irrevocably damned from the moment she first acquired the awesome power of Phoenix. In ***X-MEN* #137** (Sept. 1980), the final installment of the "***Dark Phoenix***" saga, it is belatedly and implausibly revealed that Phoenix is ***not*** Jean herself at her ultimate potential as a psi—as Claremont had reiterated numerous times in the course of the previous four years—but is a separate entity, an insatiable, amoral symbiote that somehow attached itself to Jean as she was dying in the shuttle crash in ***X-MEN* #101**. Because of the inherently all-consuming nature of the symbiote, whatever host being it inhabits is inevitably doomed to itself become a chaos-bringing agent of destruction. As Jean herself explains, "So long as I live, the Phoenix will manifest itself through me. And so long as that happens, I'll eventually, inevitably, become Dark Phoenix. The Phoenix is a cosmic power. It can neither be contained nor controlled—especially by a human vessel...[If I tried to resist the progression from Phoenix to Dark Phoenix] I'd have to stay completely in control of myself every second of every day for the rest of my immortal life. Maybe I could do it. But if I slipped, even for an instant...If I...Failed...if even one more person died at my hands..." (pp. 44-5). Jean's only possible means of saving herself from a future of committing atrocity after atrocity while possessed by the inescapably malevolent Dark Phoenix is to commit suicide. In the context of the five billion deaths she has already involuntarily been responsible for, and of her own essential innocence of the genocidal crimes committed by the Phoenix-symbiote while she was possessed by it, Jean's suicide comes across more as a despairing act of simultaneously undeserved and inadequate self-punishment, or at best an act of self-defense, than as the unadulteratedly noble and altruistic gesture Warlock's more indirect parallel act of self-sloughter is made to appear. The grotesque effect of Jean's perversely unjust death is compounded, rather than dissipated, by the Watcher's hailing her desperate step as a moral victory in a muddled epilogue which amounts to four panels of unfocussed purple gobbledygook.

Claremont's final, fatally-flawed explanation of Jean Grey's chaos-bringer's progress amounts to a theory of predestination on Earth which can only be circumvented by voluntarily choosing to die. Thus, Jean's very existence is presented as vaguely reprehensible as soon as it becomes bound up with the power of Phoenix, long before she does or even seriously considers doing anything not in accordance with her own previously-established morally upright character.

NEXT ISSUE:
Jean Grey in the Storeroom of Sad Thought Balloons

HI, I'M PORTIA PRINZ OF THE GLAMAZONS--AND BEFORE I STARTED MY NEWEST ADVENTURE, "GLAMAZON'S BURDEN', I READ ALL OF THE BOOKS IN THIS BOOKCASE!
HAVE YOU? NO? WELL, DON'T BOTHER--READ PORTIA PRINZ INSTEAD. NOT ONLY WILL YOU BENEFIT FROM MY APPLIED RESEARCH--
--BUT I'M A KIERKEGARDIAN LEAP MORE GORGEOUS THAN DAG HAMMARSKOLD.
--OR SOCRATES--
--GEORGE ELIOT
etc.
SHE'S AT IT AGAIN!
PLATO
CHERON
AESTHETICS
KANT
SOCRATES
RAND
NIETZSCHE
MARX
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Story and Art by Richard Howell.

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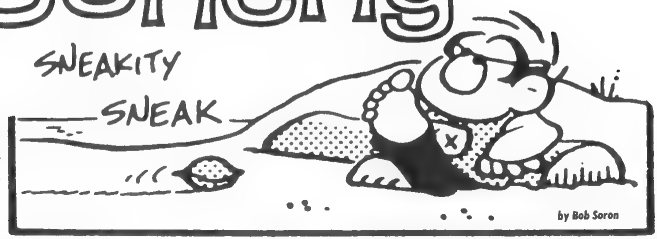
Conchy



It was 1970, and society was still in the 1960s. The disillusionment that so many experienced was still around, affecting many. And one person brightened the world with his group of dropouts.

James Childress had actually created ***CONCHY*** in 1962. He had trouble with his original concept; the strip was to feature a beachcomber, but nothing else jelled. Soon, he put it aside. The familiar creative strategy worked: eventually, everything clicked, and he felt the strip was ready for presentation to the syndicates.

In Summer of 1969, Childress decided that the syndicates were not ready for ***CONCHY***. He had been doing drafting and architectural work to support his family, with ***CONCHY*** being a part-time vocation. In Spring of 1970, he started syndicating the strip himself, and eventually took a staff job illustrating for ***THE CHARLOTTE NEWS***. The ***NEWS***, oddly enough, did not carry ***CONCHY*** for Childress' first few months with the newspaper.

What was ***CONCHY***? It was a droll, charming comic strip with some of the oddest, most endearing characters to appear on newsprint. The lead character was, of course, Conchy, the beachcomber who had come with his friends to a remote island to get away from civilization. Of course, that doesn't mean they got away from craziness...

The island they landed on was already inhabited, by a group of Islanders who were at war with the neighboring East Island, and who were also being plagued by the militant pygmies on the Island. They were led by The Chief, who was as daft as everyone else—but in a position to take advantage of it. Conchy's group and the Islanders got along well enough, true, but all of the characters were individual enough to inspire a seven-year run that rose only upward in popularity.

The humor ran the gamut of available possibilities. Each week would see the publication of at least one pun, the quality of which would make grown men weep. For instance, there was the day when an Islander guard noticed a rock with a newly-painted funny face. "Who painted a face on this rock?" he demands. The guilty party steps forward: "I did."

"Don't you know it's illegal to deface a rock?"

"It was defaced when I came along... I put the face on it. If a rock has no face, how can I deface it by putting a face on it?"

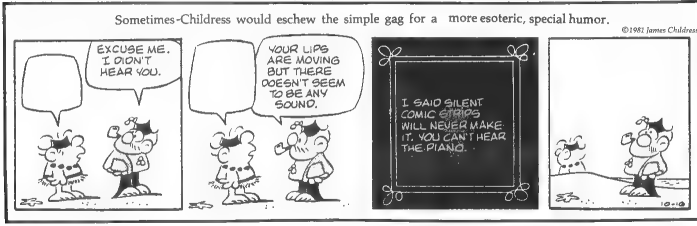
As the guard stares off into space, the painter is asked by a concerned newcomer: "What's the matter with that guard?" Replies the painter, "He lost face."

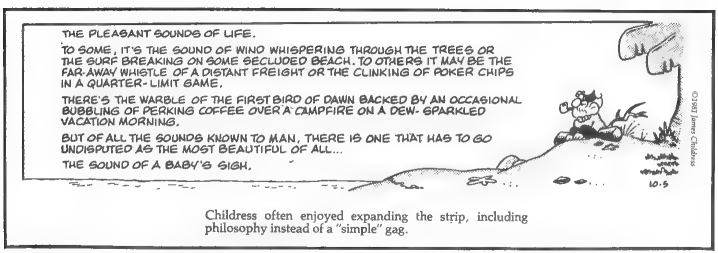
There was often a more surreal humor. Duff (the twin brother of Patch, the two of whom lived for laziness) watches as a leaf falls from a tree. The leaf flutters—and then bursts into flame and spirals groundward. Duff explains, "It's very rare you'll see a leaf burn out during re-entry."

Another of Childress' favorite subjects was signs. As much as anything else, signs rule our lives, and Childress loved to poke fun at the willingness some people displayed to obey signs—or at the simple silliness of some signs. One day, as Conchy walked along the beach, a sign warned, "Full stop ahead." Surely enough, Conchy immediately came upon a large stop sign—which burped as he passed.

CONCHY wasn't all hijinks, of course. It could be touching when Childress presented one of his soliloquies, or mordant when Childress was using his microcosm to examine our society, including politics. One scene finds an Island guard walking along with a pygmy. "Do you pygmies ever find fault with your

Sometimes Childress would eschew the simple gag for a more esoteric, special humor.


©1983 James Childress
EXCUSE ME. I DIDN'T HEAR YOU.
YOUR LIPS ARE MOVING BUT THERE DOESN'T SEEM TO BE ANY SOUND.
I SAID SILENT COMIC STRIPS WILL NEVER MAKE IT. YOU CAN'T HEAR THE PIANO.


THE PLEASANT SOUNDS OF LIFE.
TO SOME, IT'S THE SOUND OF WIND WHISPERING THROUGH THE TREES OR THE SURF BREAKING ON SOME SECLUDED BEACH. TO OTHERS IT MAY BE THE FAR-AWAY WHISTLE OF A DISTANT FREIGHT OR THE CLINKING OF POKER CHIPS IN A QUARTER-LIMIT GAME.
THERE'S THE WARBLE OF THE FIRST BIRD OF DAWN BACKED BY AN OCCASIONAL BUBBLING OF PERKING COFFEE OVER A CAMPFIRE ON A DEW-SPARKLED VACATION MORNING.
BUT OF ALL THE SOUNDS KNOWN TO MAN, THERE IS ONE THAT HAS TO GO UNDISPUTED AS THE MOST BEAUTIFUL OF ALL...
THE SOUND OF A BABY'S SIGH.
©1981 James Childress
10-5

Childress often enjoyed expanding the strip, including philosophy instead of a "simple" gag.

government as other peoples do?" ***"Never,"*** replies the pygmy, "we have a very large 'silent majority' backed by a government insurance program. We keep our mouths shut, we stay healthy."

Or there was the day that Oom Paul, the acknowledged leader of the beachcombers (being the oldest, he was the wisest), happened to walk past a television as it announced, "The following motion picture has been edited for television." From the TV comes, ***"THE ICELAND AFFAIR,*** rated R. 'Boy, it's as cold as...' "—and then, "The End." Oom Paul notes, "In our case, it's also been edited for the newspaper comic strip," as the commercial rolls by.

Some of The Island's inhabitants were fully aware that they inhabited a comic strip; others were blissfully ignorant. One—Duff—was rather rudely awakened to reality, however. In 1974, he started to write in his diary, and accidentally wrote "1984"—and was corrected by a stern caption. He immediately assumed the government was watching him, and moved out of his cave. Conchy starts to set Duff straight, and Duff starts to accept the truth—but only after getting a false nose and glasses to wear so he won't be recognized. Conchy finally introduces Duff to the syndicate credit and date, and Duff finally learns that his is actually a proud lot: "Newspaper comics are read by people in all walks of life. They range from the very wealthy and important right on down to those whose lives are dismal voids of despondency and loneliness.

"And it's probably those in the latter category who give our lives the most meaning...

"When you have added a small degree of pleasantry to those who have little, you know you have a worthwhile reason for being." As he walks away, he leaves the glasses and nose behind.

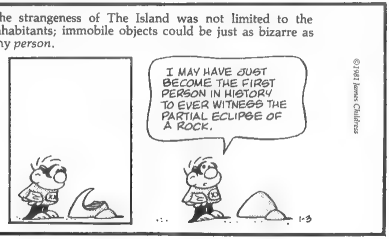
Childress also soliloquized through his strip. They would generally feature one of the leading characters on the beach, watching the waves as he thought about life. One example that is fairly representative of Childress' philosophy was carried *via* Oom Paul:

"I find the most interesting people to talk to are either the very young or the very old.

"The extremes in life are captured in those two ages. The bubbling anticipation and sheer excitement of just being alive that seems to be the hallmark of young children to the wistful smiles of wisdom that only the rigors of life can instill upon those chuckling faces as they live out their twilight years knowing that it was really no big thing after all.

"But that ulcer-ridden bunch in the middle... man, they just don't know what the heck it's all about."

The strangeness of The Island was not limited to the inhabitants; immobile objects could be just as bizarre as any *person*.



Or, perhaps (Oom Paul again):

"Ogg was a caveman.

"He lived in prehistoric times when the air was fresh and the water was pure.

"Ogg is extinct.

"Figure that one out."

Through self-syndication, Childress had built his clientele from its original five papers in 1970 to 26 in 1974. Field Enterprises took over syndication of the strip in Spring of 1974; two years later, 157 newspapers were running ***CONCHY***. Childress also gained a loyal following in fandom due to the strip's prominent placement in ***THE MENONOMEE FALLS GUARDIAN***, through that newspaper's 146 more-or-less-weekly issues. Tempo Books also released two paperbacks, ***CONCHY ON THE HALF-SHELL*** and ***CONCHY: LIVING IN TOMORROW'S PAST***, in 1973 and1976, respectively.

In 1976, Childress broke with Field. There had been differences of opinion since Field took over; the syndicate wanted a more general, wide-appeal (read: ***PEANUTS***) strip, while Childress preferred the ability to switch from whimsy to silliness to thoughtfulness. The syndicate cooperated with Childress' wishes; in May of 1976, Childress returned to self-syndication.

On January 21, 1977, James Childress shot and killed himself. No note was ever mentioned, no reasons were given—none of the ties we like to attach to loose ends when we hear something like that. The strip, needless to say, was not continued; no one could have continued it. The strip was James Childress' much more so than ***POGO*** was Walt Kelly's (and I say that as a great admirer of Kelly): ***POGO*** had been bought by a syndicate early in its existence, and was successful in every way until Kelly's illness and then death in 1974. But ***CONCHY*** struggled almost throughout its entire run; Childress alone was almost entirely responsible for whatever successes—and failures—it had, because of his determination for self-syndication and creative control. He had no assistants; most of the time, the strip was done in his spare time.

Since then, the comics pages of newspapers have seemed a little emptier.

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EVERY TIME
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THE BEST SCRIPTS
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IN COMMON:

ADVENTURE!

When Max Gaines created the entertainment package called ***FUNNIES ON PARADE*** in 1933, no one realized that he had just developed the modern comic book. After all, dozens of publishers had issued hundreds of comics between 1899 and 1932, and most reasonable people, if aware of such matters at all, would have felt that Gaines was simply issuing one more experimental reprint package.

How was anyone to know, therefore, the significance of Gaines' product? Did anyone predict that his marketing strategem would result in the formation of an entirely new publishing field? Indeed, could anyone have known that the publication of this single comic book would eventually change the reading habits of the entire Westernized world? What did Gaines perceive that his contemporaries could not? And how was it that, of the 500 comics published betwen 1899 and 1933, ***FUNNIES ON PARADE*** became the seminal issue from which all the later comics have evolved?

In order to answer these questions, we shall have to examine the comic book packages which preceded ***FUNNIES ON PARADE***. These earlier comics were only issued in four different basic formats, and all of these formats are understandable when considered as the direct result of a little creativity being applied to the reprinting of newspaper comic strips.

Although there is disagreement as to what was the first comic book, largely because some magazines, including ***THE YELLOW KID*** and ***PUCK***, featured comic strip(s) prior to 1899, it nonetheless seems most likely that the first true comic book was F. M. Howarth's ***FUNNY FOLKS***, which was published in New York by E. P. Dutton & Co. in 1899. Measuring 11 7/8" x 16 3/8" x 5/8", this hardcover volume features reprints of extraordinary quality from the pages of ***PUCK*** magazine. A little less than half of the book is in full color.

Although this book is very rare today, and no sales reports for it are available, it clearly made quite an impact on the early comic book publishers. In fact, most, if not all, of the comic books which were published during the next decade utilized this basic Dutton format, which effectively printed one Sunday comic strip (in half page structure) per page. The years from 1900 to 1910 saw the publication of the following classic strips, all in the Dutton format: ***ALPHONSE, GASTON AND LEON***; ***BUSTER BROWN***; ***FOXY GRANDPA***; ***HAPPY HOOLIGAN***; ***JIMMY***; ***THE KATZENJAMMER KIDS***; ***LITTLE NEMO***; ***LITTLE SAMMY SNEEZE***; ***MAUD***; ***PECK'S BAD BOY***; ***PORE LI'L MOSE***; and ***WILLIE WESTINGHOUSE EDISON SMITH***.

A variety of publishers offered these books for sale, usually in soft covers, including: Frederick Stokes; William A. Stokes; the New York Herald; the New York American and Journal; Doffield and Co.; and Cupples and Leon.

Dutton's format was particularly well suited for reprinting Sunday strips, and it therefore dominated the first decade of comic book production. After all, the first daily strip was not successfully established until 1907 when Bud Fisher created "A. Mutt," and no one was to issue new material comic books until after the close of WWI. During the first decade that

comic books existed, then, the publishers who were interested in comic books seemed content to merely reprint the Sunday funnies.

By 1910, however, the daily strip was becoming quite popular, largely because of the brilliantly expressed humor in ***MUTT & JEFF***. In fact, by 1910 ***MUTT AND JEFF*** were so popular that they were being merchandised as statues, they were portrayed in one or more successful stage plays. It was, therefore, hardly surprising that someone eventually thought of reprinting their daily comic strip adventures.

Ball Publishing was the first company to do so, issuing their first ***MUTT AND JEFF*** book in 1910, and developing a new comic book format for it. Utilizing hard covers as Dutton had done, Ball merely printed one-large size daily strip per 5" x 15" page. This resultant ***MUTT AND JEFF*** series was popular enough to last five issues, most of which underwent a variety of reprintings. Also, as one might expect, other publishers copied this basic as they issued their own daily strip reprints.

In 1917 the third basic comic book format was developed, and was used to reprint the ***CHARLIE CHAPLIN*** daily strips that were created by Segar. This format was similar to the Dutton one, except that it was softcover, measured about 9" x 16", and featured two daily strips to each page.

By the early 1920s, however, Cupples and Leon had developed what was unquestionably the most successful of all the pre-***FUNNIES ON PARADE*** comic book formats. They relied, as had Ball, upon reprinting four panels to a page, but they structured the page quite differently, resulting in a more or less 10" square comic book. This format, issued in both hard and soft covers, was physically much easier to read than the previous three formats, and Cupples and Leon were quick to combine this physical advantage with several continuing series of top quality strips. Among their many stars were ***BRINGING UP FATHER***, ***BARNEY GOOGLE***, ***MUTT AND JEFF***, ***LITTLE ORPHAN ANNIE***, and ***MICKEY MOUSE***. These books were usually printed in black and white, contained 52 pages and cost 25¢ in softbound covers.

These, then, were the four basic formats that comic book publishers utilized up until 1933. They were logical constructions which served to reprint comic strips fairly well, but they were still merely a trifle in the overall scheme of publishing.

Max Gaines, however, was about to change all that!

He would do so by introducing a superior comic book package which was the first to use the following elements in combination with each other. First, he decided to print his comic in full color instead of the usual black and white, and to do so in a size that was easy for the reader to handle. Second, he decided to increase his product's innate appeal by including quite a number of different strips instead of just one (much like the Sunday funny papers themselves). And third, he lowered the retail cost of the comics.

Gaines, then, was acting like a classic capitalist. He was trying to fulfill a basic human need (i.e., the desire for entertainment) by combining an established commercial medium with innovations in technology and content, which he then could market at a price that would greatly undercut his competition. The public thereby got a better product than what they had been getting, and at a lower cost. Gaines figured he couldn't miss, and he was entirely correct.

Sometime in 1933, then, Gaines sold the entire print run of ***FUNNIES ON PARADE*** (a mere 10,000 copies) to Proctor and Gamble, who gave the comics away free as premiums. The success of ***FUNNIES ON PARADE*** was so great that Gaines quickly issued ***A CARNIVAL OF COMICS*** and ***CENTURY OF COMICS***, reportedly selling these in editions of 100,000 to 250,000 copies. These new colorful comic book packages were literally brightening the gloom of the Great Depression, and someone quickly realized that if people were rushing out in the hundreds of thousands to acquire these comic books as premiums, that some of those people would be happy to pay outright for the comics themselves. Thus was born the first modern monthly comic book, the extremely successful and very important ***FAMOUS FUNNIES***. To understand ***FAMOUS FUNNIES***, however, one must understand the

significance of ***FUNNIES ON PARADE***.

And what actually makes ***FUNNIES ON PARADE*** so monumentally important is that it was revolutionary not only in physical format, but also in content. After all, if ***FUNNIES ON PARADE*** contained features that no one wanted to read, then its commercial success might have changed to failure, and we might all still be reading Big Little Books! (These are small comic strip reprint books with one panel of art per every other page. BLBs also apparently debuted in 1933.)

The contents of ***FUNNIES ON PARADE***, however, were in fact very carefully chosen, so as to appeal to almost anyone who might read it. There were several "kid" strips, including Gene Byrnes' ***REG'LAR FELLERS***, Dwig's ***NIPPER***, and ***S'MATTER POP?*** There were the "sit-com" type strips for the adults, including ***KEEPING UP WITH THE JONESES***, ***THE BUNGLE FAMILY***, ***HONEYBUNCH'S HUBBY***, and ***SOMEBODY'S STEHOG***. There were six pages of ***BLACKSTONE MAGIC*** as well as two activities pages which dealt with ***FORMING YOUR OWN CLUB*** (including secret codes), and which included a crossword puzzle. There was the exotica of John Hix's ***STRANGE AS IT SEEMS***, the zany antics of ***MUTT AND JEFF***, the heroic nobility of ***JOE PALOOKA***, and, just to ensure the comic's success, there was the irresistible sex and violence of ***HAIRBREADTH HARRY*** (feminists will unhappily note that female bondage has been an integral aspect of comics from their very beginning).

Gaines, then was able to envision certain realities in advance of his contemporaries, and he did seem to realize, once the success of his first few comics was established, that it might be possible to generate an entirely new publishing genre from his "modern" comic books. It is of course unlikely that anyone, including Gaines, had any accurate idea as to just how popular the "modern" comic book might become. But certainly there were those (including Gaines) who knew that this was a business worth pursuing.

Within about a year, Eastern Color (who had printed ***FUNNIES ON PARADE***) had decided to enter the comic publishing business itself, and their first comic was apparently ***FAMOUS FUNNIES***. Since ***FAMOUS FUNNIES*** was also the first modern comic title to be marketed as a series—the earlier comics had been one-shots—the type of continuity that it would feature from issue to issue was bound to directly affect the early history of the comics in a profound manner. All later comics would necessarily react in some way to it.

The fact that the early ***FAMOUS FUNNIES*** include every single feature (save one) that

FUNNIES ON PARADE initially showcased shows clearly, then, that Gaines' ***FUNNIES ON PARADE*** is the seminal comic book, not only in terms of physical characteristics but likewise in terms of content. ***FAMOUS FUNNIES***, in effect, took Gaines' book and expanded it to 64 pages from 32. They achieved this by taking every single feature from the original ***FUNNIES ON PARADE*** (save for ***REG'LAR FELLERS***, which would be released by Eastern Color in 1940 as ***REG'LAR FELLERS HEROIC***), a total of thirteen separate features, and by adding to those features a large assortment of other similar or complementary strips. Most noteworthy of the additional strips chosen by Eastern for ***FAMOUS FUNNIES #2*** are the following: ***JANE ARDEN***, ***CONNIE***, and ***DIXIE DUGAN***, the female stars; ***NAPOLEON, DIP AND DUCK***, ***BUTTONS AND FATTY***, and ***THE ADVENTURES OF JABBY***, the animal strips; ***MED BRANT AT CARTER—A STORY OF COLLEGE ATHLETICS*** and ***FLYING TO FAME*** or ***SLIM AND TUBBY***, the adventure strips. By the time that ***FAMOUS FUNNIES #6*** was issued—January 1935—the modern comic book was pretty well defined, as ***BUCK ROGERS***, ***DAN DUNN***, and ***ULLY OF THE MOVIES*** had by that time joined the comic's roster, and had provided additional romantic adventure and fantasy.

FUNNIES ON PARADE, then, evolved directly into ***FAMOUS FUNNIES***, which, in turn, became the seminal influence on Malcolm Wheeler-Nicholson's fledgling line of new comics (the first attempt at marketing a "modern" style comic book with all new material). Malcolm quickly realized that if Eastern Color could make money selling people comic strips that they've already read, then someone else should be able to do at least as well selling them something brand new that has never been seen before. (This reasoning may have developed from the fact that a first run movie showing will normally do better than any of its re-releases.)

Persons who examine Wheeler-Nicholson's earliest "modern" comics with the intent of understanding the influence which ***FUNNIES ON PARADE*** had on them quickly note the two basic reactions that Malcolm himself had towards ***FAMOUS FUNNIES*** (and hence ***FUNNIES ON PARADE***). First, he makes a very great deal about the fact that all of the material in his comics is new. The very first regular size DC comic book, ***NEW COMICS*** #1, proclaims with its very title that this comic features new material. And, as if the title itself were not enough, other similar proclamations are made in the interior pages. Further, Wheeler-Nicholson's other titles, ***MORE FUN COMICS*** and ***DETECTIVE COMICS***, likewise stress the fact that the entire package is new, and specifically designed to fit the dimensions of the modern comic book.

Having thus done as much as possible to stress the difference between himself and Eastern, one may be surprised to learn that Wheeler-Nicholson's features are thematically very similar to Eastern's. In fact, it is fair to say that Wheeler-Nicholson apparently wanted to produce a comic that was almost identical

to (the successful) ***FAMOUS FUNNIES***, but that he wanted to use all new material instead of mostly all reprint. Since this desire to experiment with new material led inevitably to the development of the super-hero, super-heroes as a class clearly owe ***FUNNIES ON PARADE*** a measure of gratitude, for Wheeler-Nicholson's experimentations did eventually lead to the development of the first super-hero, in ***MORE FUN COMICS #14***, from 1936. After all, this first super-hero, Dr. Occult, was a logical outgrowth of the Buck Rogers themes which Siegel and Shuster had been doing for Wheeler-Nicholson for some months.

When one stops to consider that the first super-hero in comics was the result of someone imitating ***FAMOUS FUNNIES***, which had itself been set in motion by Gaines' ***FUNNIES ON PARADE***, one begins to truly understand why ***FUNNIES ON PARADE*** is so awesomely significant.

In sum, then, ***FUNNIES ON PARADE*** was a totally new physical package for a comic book. Just as importantly, it was also a new thematic package. Both of these characteristics, as initially envisioned by Gaines, were so well received that some 50,000 different comics were marketed in the 33 years following ***FUNNIES ON PARADE***'s debut, whereas only about 500 were marketed in the 33 years preceding its appearance.

Further, the thematic content of the comic book that Gaines assembled (i.e. the type of stories that he printed) was so well received by the public that it led, inevitably, to the development of the super-hero. Once that happened, comic books became a major publishing field, and the direct result is that many millions of comics are being sold every month throughout Western Europe and Japan as well as the United States. Comic book characters are becoming increasingly well known by the general public, and many childhoods (and quite a few adulthoods, too) would have been very different if comics had not been present to provide a needed type of entertainment.

And we owe it all to Max Gaines, creator of the modern comic book!

Throughout this article, the author has assumed that Max Gaines was indeed the publisher of the first modern comic book, ***FUNNIES ON PARADE***. This is because all of this historical evidence to which the author has had access indicates that Gaines was in fact that publisher.

Unfortunately, the author is unaware of any hard evidence that might corroborate this supposition. ***FUNNIES ON PARADE*** does not contain a publisher's statement like most comic books do. In fact, parts of ***FUNNIES ON PARADE*** are not even copyrighted! The parts that are copyrighted are copyrighted by at least six different entities, including: Public Ledger, Gene Byrnes, The Associated Newspapers, R.C. Fisher, the McNaught Syndicate, Inc., and the Bell Syndicate, Inc. Certainly, this book is somewhat of a novelty in terms of publication and copyright.

Other factors also interact to cloud the publisher's title. For example, Gaines was reportedly an employee of Eastern Color when he put together this ***FUNNIES ON PARADE*** package. Was he in fact acting as an independent agent (which would make Gaines the "official" publisher), or was he acting as an employee of Eastern? If he was in fact acting as an employee, then Eastern Color would be the publisher, as well as the printer, of ***FUNNIES ON PARADE***. (It is interesting to note that the inventory of the Eastern Color comic book archives included five copies of ***FUNNIES ON PARADE***, which indicates that Eastern thought that ***FUNNIES ON PARADE*** was an important publication from the time of its original issuance.)

On the other hand, Gaines reportedly sold the entire print run of ***FUNNIES ON PARADE*** to Proctor and Gamble, who distributed the comic, free of charge, as a premium to the customers of their products. Under certain legal arrangements, this could have made Proctor and Gamble the actual publisher of

FUNNIES ON PARADE, and Gaines merely the packager.

Regardless of exactly who is the technical publisher of the first modern comic book, however, it does seem that Gaines deserves the bulk of the credit. After all, his name has been associated with the comic as its publisher for many years, and the basic idea seems to have been his.

At any rate, ***FUNNIES ON PARADE*** is a magnificent comic, and it is unquestionably one of the most important publications to appear during this entire century. Collectors should be aware that items of this importance occur only very rarely, and once they are recognized for what they truly are their value escalates dramatically, and they become extremely difficult to purchase at any price. Collectors who would like to own a copy of ***FUNNIES ON PARADE*** should try to acquire one as soon as possible, as a reasonable fair market value for this comic should be comparable to the fair market value of ***ACTION COMICS #1*** or ***MARVEL COMICS #1***. After all, ***FUNNIES ON PARADE*** is at least as important, historically speaking, as the ***ACTION*** and ***MARVEL #1***s, and it is at least as rare (in fact, there were about 50 copies of ***ACTION COMICS #1*** printed for every one copy of ***FUNNIES ON PARADE***). The current rare comic market does not reflect this comparable valuation, however, and ***FUNNIES ON PARADE*** is only presently valued at only about 5% of the worth of ***ACTION*** or ***MARVEL #1***! Once collectors and investors understand ***FUNNIES ON PARADE***'s true significance, however, its value should quickly increase until it is comparable to ***ACTION*** or ***MARVEL COMICS #1***, both of which, after all, evolved directly from ***FUNNIES ON PARADE***.

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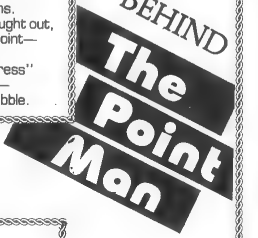

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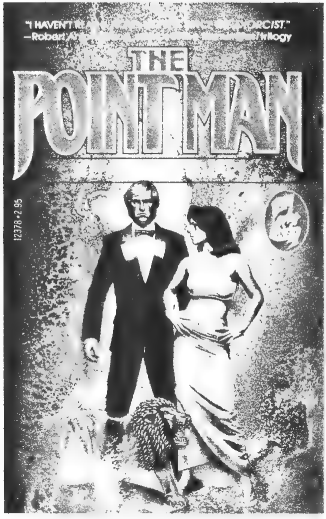

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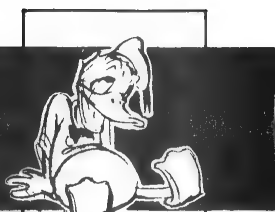

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In the Summer of 1981 two exhibitions of animation art were held in New York City. The first to open was ***"The Moving Image,"*** primarily drawn from the collection of Jerome K. Muller, which spent much of the summer at the Cooper-Hewitt Museum (a division of the Smithsonian Institution) in the course of its nationwide tour of museums. The other was ***"Disney Animations and Animators,"*** organized by animation scholar Greg Ford and drawn from private collections and the Disney archives themselves, at the Whitney Museum of American Art.

"The Moving Image" was somewhat misnamed, since it consisted primarily of single production sketches, animation drawings and cels, each capturing but a frozen moment from an entire film. A striking exception was a four-cel composite from the Richard Williams Studio's title sequence for 1975's ***RETURN OF THE PINK PANTHER,*** juxtaposing four moments from a smooth soft-shoe dance performed by the Pink Panther: he begins by shuffling backward, holding onto a cane with both hands and, from beneath his straw hat, giving the audience a look indicating his confident pleasure in his own abilities, and then his body, at first curving to the left, stretches back into a curve to the right as his half-shut eyes open fully and he raises the cane high in one hand and points upward to the left with it, presumably at a climactic moment in the music. This is all played out within a spotlight against a black background, focusing one's full attention on the performer.

But if for the most part with the other work on display one cannot study a sequence of movement, there are other rewards to be gained from studying these drawings and cels. One can examine instead the design of characters and backgrounds to see how the animation artists conveyed personality and mood through even individual pieces of art.

Take, for example, the oldest—but one of the best—pieces in the exhibition, the drawing from Winsor McCay's celebrated 1914 animated cartoon ***GERTIE, THE TRAINED DINOSAUR.*** First, it is a lesson in conveying the idea of great size. Gertie towers over the small figure of McCay himself, who must crane his neck backward to look up at Gertie's head, which in fact she has lowered to watch him; the way McCay's jacket is drawn emphasizes the backward tilt of his spine, and one notices that although McCay is holding his whip nearly straight upward, the peak of Gertie's back still rises far higher that the whip can extend. In turn, the huge rock formations of the background exceed Gertie in height, and the deep canyon to the left looks as if it could easily swallow her up.

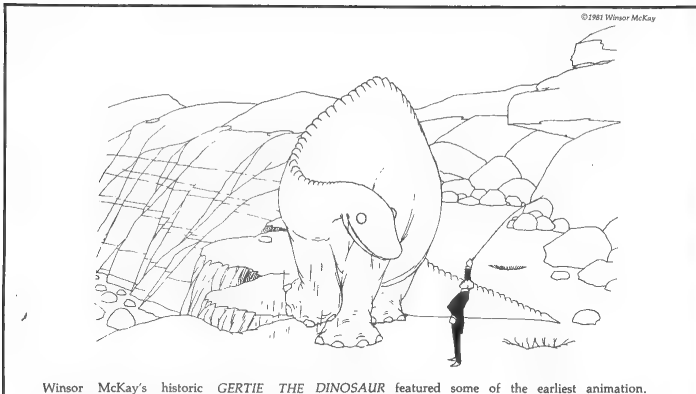
Although the overall design of the drawing is simple, the large number of vertebrae drawn along Gertie's neck, back and tail, the number of rocks, and the furrow-like strata along the side of the canyon give the drawing a detailed look as well.

At the center of the picture is Gertie's head, and one notes the simple means with which the creature's appealingly childlike personality is conveyed despite her enormous size: her mouth curves upward in an understated smile, and she has large blank eyes that somehow, like Harold Grey's for Little Orphan Annie, seem open and friendly.

The other exception in the show as far as showing whole sequences of movement is concerned is a series of four drawings from McCay's 1918 ***THE SINKING OF THE LUSITANIA.*** In the first the great ship floats amid waves that resemble innumerable rolling hills. Smoke rises from the smokestacks like geysers, while another long, thin smoke cloud coils between stacks like a rope or snake. In the second drawing, from a later point in the film, the ship has unmistakenly suffered the impact of the German torpedo. A great column of smoke bursts upward from the ship, and that column is contained within an even larger cloud which also seems to rise from the ship. Big chunks of what one presumes is part of the ship hurtle upward through the smoke along with many black specks. The ocean has turned choppy, its waves now resembling small mountains. By the third picture the ship has tilted somewhat as it begins sinking amid the rough hill-like waves. The right end of the ***Lusitania*** is now entombed in what seems to be an enormous dark grey cloud pouring down from the heavens to settle upon the sea. The last of the four shows that the left end of the ship is submerged in an ocean that is now unnaturally calm, considering the situation. The thick black cloud smothers the top of the ship, pours off the right end and rises upward again. The ship's flags wave bravely towards the sky, but numerous ropes hang downward from the deck into the sea. Masses of people in silhouette, looking tiny in comparison with the great ship, press towards the edge: a few are climbing down the ropes while others hurl themselves through the air into the engulfing ocean. Thus the awesome spectacle of the destruction of the great ship is linked with the pathos of the fates of its individual passengers, small and helpless before this cataclysm.

Through the Warners cartoon art on display, one can see the development of three of the studio's best-known characters. Compare the two Bugs Bunny cels there. The first is from one of his first cartoons, 1939's ***HARE-UM SCARE-UM,*** directed by Ben Hardaway and Cal Dalton. It shows a grotesque short rabbit holding a bottle whose contents are splattering out. The face looks primitively designed, with a pudgy yet flattened snout, huge buck teeth, and large, wide eyes brimming with excitement but not indicative of any more subtle personality traits. This rabbit seems a hick prankster and no more. Then take a look at the nearby cel from a much later, unidentified Chuck Jones ***"Bugs Bunny"*** cartoon: this Bugs of course looks like the one with which we are all familiar, but what is interesting is the way the whole drawing subtly expresses the character's personality, or more specifically, Jones' particular interpretation of that personality. This Bugs is slowly walking away while gently shrugging. There is something strangely elegant in the way his back, leg and foot curve as he steps forward, as if he was moving like a dancer. Observe too that he is calmly watching out of the corner of his half-closed eyes whoever it is he is leaving behind, perhaps to see his reaction, and that he is wearing a pursed but placid smile: this rabbit is an ironic observer and master of events. He may be as absurd a creature as a rabbit who talks with a New York accent, but there is undeniably an air of sophisticated intelligence to him as well.

Jones' first model sheet for the Roadrunner and Wile E. Coyote (at that time tentatively named Don Coyote, perhaps as a comment on his effectiveness in pursuing his never-ending quest) comes as quite a revelation. Jones has



Winsor McKay's historic *GERTIE THE DINOSAUR* featured some of the earliest animation.

said that the Roadrunner cartoons were originally intended to parody chase cartoons; it would seem from this sheet that they were to parody nature documentaries as well. There is relatively little that is anthropomorphic about the Coyote of this model sheet: for one thing, it would seem that he always got about on all fours. Instead this Coyote is a caricature of an animal designed for hunting, and hungry enough to have to do so. He has large staring eyes below a grim, unbroken, horseshoe-shaped brow, huge ears pointed forward, a snout similarly thrusting forward before ending in a slightly comically drooping nose, and a similarly drooping tongue, which apparently always hung from his mouth. This Coyote is always hungry and obsessively intent on searching for prey. His limbs are extremely thin and his ribs show from beneath his fur, but he has large paws and big, powerful shoulders, both surely useful in pursuing his fleet-footed prey. There is something scruffy about this creature as well: the fur on his shoulders sticks upward like porcupine quills.

The original version of the Roadrunner, as seen on this sheet, also looks a bit grotesque in comparison to the later, more handsome bird. The original has very large feet and big thighs, again, like the Coyote's, for running, and a weird curved tail. Its eyes are set far down on a longer beak than today's bird, and it has not the familiar topknot of head feathers but instead something resembling a wild, uncombed haircut of feathers. The smile is already there, but combined with the rest of the design of the face and head, it gives this Roadrunner a goofy look, reminiscent of the early Woody Woodpecker. Still, there is an intelligent look in this Roadrunner's eyes.

The documentary parody aspect of the Roadrunner cartoons evidently ended up being reduced only to the use of the freeze frames and phony Latin scientific names for the animals at the start of each cartoon. (Those names are already present on the initial model sheet.) A 1948 Coyote model sheet which contains poses from his first cartoon ***FAST AND FURRY-OUS*** shows a character much closer to the present-day version. Now he stands upright, the parts of his body more closely match in size, and he looks far more anthropomorphic and less like a true hunting animal. The Coyote's hunger and obsessiveness no longer manifest themselves in his design, but have been internalized in his personality. The Coyote of the first model sheet looks like a one-note character: there seems to be no intelligence and no emotion beyond hunger behind that intent stare. That Coyote was simply an animal; the version settled upon was a human in animal form, capable of a whole range of emotions. The sheet shows numerous Coyote heads, their fluid features and highly expressive eyes denoting sinister determination, happy surprise, craftiness, fear, despair, utter shock—the whole range of emotions that give the character his depth and appeal.

The 1960 Roadrunner model sheet next to it makes clear the bird's dominant personality trait: his inexhaustible exuberance. His smile is unshakeable. One shot has him stretching his neck upward, beak wide open, beeping happily. Another has the bird jumping into the air, legs apart, head cocked upward, his beak smilingly open, as if he was giving an exultant cry. Another pose shows the Roadrunner watching something—presumably the Coyote—careening overhead with gleefully alert eyes: the Roadrunner too is an amused observer of events, confident in his own mastery of them.

Another notable work in the exhibit is a cel by Richard Williams of Ebeneezer Scrooge and Marley's Ghost from his 1971 animated film of Dickens' ***A CHRISTMAS CAROL***. Marley is not ghostly white here; rather, it is the living man, Scrooge, whose colors are pink and white. Instead, Marley is painted in green and grey, matching well with the dull brown of the background. The effect is heightened by the short texture lines drawn into the background walls, onto Scrooge's chair, and along Marley's face and clothes; Marley is just as substantial as the wood, and just as unliving. Scrooge's nightcap-style hat rises straight up upon his head, and the tails of Marley's coat also, somehow, eerily rise straight upward. The vertical movement of the tails mirrors the long vertical line that is the side of Marley's mouth, apparently agape in a scream. Marley's face is distorted and elongated, and his hair, and even his pigtail, stand on end, rising upward. Scrooge's cringing body contrasts sharply with Marley's rigid, thrusting, pointing arm, leveled right at Scrooge's face. Yet, adding to the unnatural appearance of this ghost, Marley's staring gaze is directed not at Scrooge but upward, as if he could not see Scrooge although it is obvious that he does. Perhaps an image of blind justice is intended?

"The Moving Image" contains work from the Fleischer, Lantz, Iwerks, Hanna-Barbara, Ward, Jones, and Bakshi Studios as well, but half the display is devoted to Disney animation art, beginning with animation drawings by Ub Iwerks from the first ***"Mickey Mouse"*** cartoon to be made, ***PLANE CRAZY***, and also from the first to be released, which was also the first cartoon with fully synchronized sound, ***STEAMBOAT WILLIE*** (both from 1928). Here what is impressive is the expressive power Iwerks achieves through such simple means in a deceptively primitive looking style. In the ***PLANE CRAZY*** drawing the entire plane tilts forward indicating its great speed, Minnie radiates sheer panic, and Mickey's expression and pose project a demonic determination. One of Black Pete's hands in the ***STEAMBOAT WILLIE*** drawing really is drawn primitively, looking more like a pinwheel than anything human. But the rest of the character is drawn with care. His eyes and mouth indicate his grim watchfulness, his contained but palpable anger, and his mean disposition. His ears bend back as if pushed by his furrowed brow, and his huge arm reaches straight out to grasp the startled Mickey firmly.

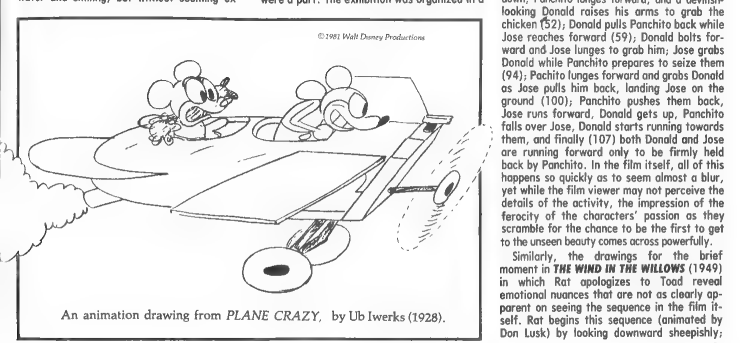
From these initial Disney Studio efforts the exhibit ranges forward in time roughly thirty years to cels from ***SLEEPING BEAUTY***, with work from most of the most celebrated features and shorts in between. For example, there is a dynamic cel (with background) of skating Frost Fairies from the ***"Nutcracker Suite"*** segment of ***FANTASIA***, striking heroic poses on pointe, their heads looking up, chests out, left legs and arms and snowflake-like wings thrust straight back, while a stream of ice seems to shoot behind them. Nearby is a "concept drawing" of a baby winged horse from the ***"Pastoral Symphony"*** sequence, frolicking on its back in the water and smiling, but without seeming excessively cute. The drawing's style looks familiar, as well it should: it was done by Walt Kelly in his days as a Disney animator before he left to create ***POGO***.

But an even better place to study the work of the Disney animation studio was the Whitney's extraordinary exhibit. For the most post it confines itself to the studio's work between 1932 and 1942, often considered its most creative period. There are some examples of work from both before and after that time as well, going as far back as animation drawings by Hugh Harmon and Rudolf Ising from Disney's silent ***ALICE IN CARTOONLAND SERIES*** and a 1927 Ub Iwerks animation drawing of Disney's silent star Oswald the Lucky Rabbit strumming a banjo. The exhibition also moved forward in time as far as a sequence of drawings by animator Milt Kahl of the tiger Shere Khan walking in 1967's ***THE JUNGLE BOOK***, and, finally, to model sheets, animation drawings and cels for the brilliant scene of the battle with the grizzly bear in 1981's ***THE FOX AND THE HOUND***.

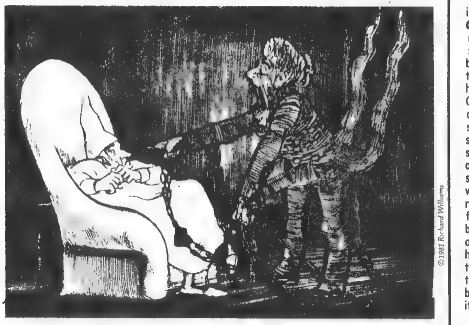
Whereas the Cooper-Hewitt exhibition concerned itself with single cels and drawings, the emphasis at the Whitney was on series of drawings portraying sequences of movement. Not every drawing from such a sequence would trace the complete progress of the particular action being depicted. Frequently alongside the display there would be a videotape monitor showing the "pencil test" for the sequence (the animation drawings filmed in sequence to simulate movement) or the sequence in the finished animated film, or both. Film programs making up a superb retrospective of Disney shorts and features of the period were held in the small theater on the same floor as the exhibit, allowing one to see sequences displayed in the exhibit in the context of the whole films of which they were a part. The exhibition was organized in a scholarly fashion, designed to demonstrate various animation techniques and to show the particular talents of important animators associated with Disney. The film programs, too, were organized around specific themes, such as character relationships, animation of objects, use of perspective and wartime cartoons. The audiences were hardly composed solely of students of the art of animation; the exhibit, and especially the film screenings, became extremely popular as the summer went on, attracting ever greater numbers of parents with children, and school and camp groups. The theatre could hold only one hundred and twenty people at a time, and it eventually became necessary to arrive over two hours before a screening to be certain of getting in. Invariably, though, the excellence of the cartoons proved well worth the long waits.

One lesson that the exhibit impresses upon one is that of the complexity of actions in the cartoons that seem to go by in a blink of an eye in the finished film. On display are a few dozen drawings from ***THE TORTOISE AND THE HARE*** (1935) in which the super-fast Max Hare, animated by Hamilton Luske, speeds into the frame, turns about, leaps upward to swat a tennis ball with his racquet, and zooms back offscreen; in the finished film this whole sequence takes no more than a second or two. Or look at a sequence by Ward Kimball from ***THE THREE CABALLEROS*** (1945). The display begins with Donald Duck, the parrot Jose Carioca and the chicken Panchito all whistling in unison at an offscreen woman (drawing 17). Around 15 drawings later Panchito is leaping in the air while Donald tenses his arms and legs and Jose hops around a bit; then Panchito is back on the ground, legs whirling in a circle, while Donald leaps and Jose stretches his body and arms upward (41)); Jose leaps high into the air while Donald comes down and Panchito moves forward (49); Jose comes back down, Panchito lunges forward, and a devilish-looking Donald raises his arms to grab the chicken (52); Donald pulls Panchito back while Jose reaches forward (59); Donald bolts forward and Jose lunges to grab him; Jose grabs Donald while Panchito prepares to seize them (94); Pachito lunges forward and grabs Donald as Jose pulls him back, landing Jose on the ground (100); Panchito pushes them back, Jose runs forward, Donald gets up, Panchito falls over Jose, Donald starts running towards them, and finally (107) both Donald and Jose are running forward only to be firmly held back by Panchito. In the film itself, all of this happens so quickly as to seem almost a blur, yet while the film viewer may not perceive the details of the activity, the impression of the ferocity of the characters' passion as they scramble for the chance to be the first to get to the unseen beauty comes across powerfully.

Similarly, the drawings for the brief moment in ***THE WIND IN THE WILLOWS*** (1949) in which Rat apologizes to Toad reveal emotional nuances that are not as clearly apparent on seeing the sequence in the film itself. Rat begins this sequence (animated by Don Lusk) by looking downward sheepishly;



An animation drawing from *PLANE CRAZY*, by Ub Iwerks (1928).



An original version of *A CHRISTMAS CAROL*, by Richard Williams.

then he straightens up and, looking as if nothing is wrong, and indeed, seeming somewhat pompous with his closed eyes and raised head, begins to speak. Yet as he completes the sentence ("Sorry, Toad, I misjudged you."), he turns his head away in obvious unease. This sequence does not move so fast in the film that these details cannot be perceived and interpreted by the viewer willing to look for them. The casual viewer may let them pass him by, but they surely make a subconscious impression on him nonetheless, contributing to his overall impression of Rat. Moreoever, these nuances bring a greater complexity to Rat's personality than one expects from "funny animals" and demonstrates how a good animator imparts acting ability to his characters. It is wonderful to see the subtle shifts in characters' feelings over the course of the drawings in one of the exhibited sequences.

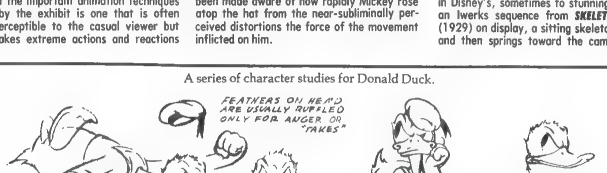
One of the important animation techniques treated by the exhibit is one that is often barely perceptible to the casual viewer but which makes extreme actions and reactions appear more forceful to him nonetheless. This is the "squash-stretch" technique illustrated in various sequences on display. For example, in a Dick Lundy sequence from ***THROUGH THE MIRROR*** (1936), Mickey, who has shrunk to the size of a real mouse, is standing on a flattened top hat which suddenly shoots upward into its normal shape. The effect is like that of an elevator, and in drawing 1 Mickey's body seems compressed and flattened—"squished"—by the upward force. Then the reaction to the upward force begins: in drawing 3 Mickey looks normal, but in 5 he is stretching upward, and by 9 his body has elongated and narrowed tremendously. Then he snaps back to normal, shooting back toward normal size in 13, reaching normal size but standing in a squatting position in 17, and then standing erect and looking normal in 21. The whole process takes perhaps less than a second of screen time, but the viewer has been made aware of how rapidly Mickey rose atop the hat from the near-subliminally perceived distortions the force of the movement inflicted on him.

An incredible example of the "stretching" is provided by Ed Love's "take" for Goofy in ***GOOFY AND WILBUR*** (1939). It begins with a normal Goofy seeing the amazing event off-screen (drawing 1). Then his snout and head begin to extend in opposite directions (3) until they reach wildly distorted extremes, with the head and snout dwarfing the other parts of Goofy's body; simultaneously, he is hunched over, as if bending forward to see the astounding thing better. Then the snout, which is still seemingly over twice its normal length, seems to be forcing itself backwards, in the direction in which the rest of Goofy's head stretched (8). A normal Goofy staggers backwards from the recoil (10), shakes his head rapidly (in drawing 36, in which he has three faces under one hat), stands with his knees bent, eyes shut and mouth open in shock (46), and then thrusts his head straight forward and his arms back as he looks in utter disbelief at that incredible sight. In the completed film, the elongation of face, head and snout is only briefly visible, but everything adds up to make it the ultimate in takes.

Examples of stretching arms and hands, which probably escape the conscious of a viewer of the finished film, can be found in animation roughs by Preston Blair of Mickey Mouse as ***FANTASIA***'s Sorcerer's Apprentice desperately reaching out to halt the uncontrollable animate broom, and in Les Clark's drawings of Mickey performing magic feats in ***MAGICIAN MICKEY*** (1937). In some instances the exaggeration is immediately noticeable in the drawings while in others one might miss it on first glance; in all cases the elongations throw emphasis on the arms and hands and their movements.

Over and over in the exhibition there are examples of effects that Disney's cartoons achieved that are infrequently seen in today's world of limited animation. It might be something as simple as the fact that each different toy in the parade in ***SANTA'S WORKSHOP*** (1932)—the soldiers, the penguins, the elephant, the donkey, the Chinese dolls, the Chaplin doll and the policeman—has its own individual manner of moving. Animated cartoon characters today rarely move towards the camera, but they did in Disney's, sometimes to stunning effect. In an Iwerks sequence from ***SKELETON DANCE*** (1929) on display, a sitting skeleton crouches and then springs toward the camera, which

A series of character studies for Donald Duck.


FEATHERS ON HEAD ARE USUALLY RUFFLED ONLY FOR ANGER OR "TAKES"
HINGE OF BILL OUTSIDE CIRCLE OF HEAD ONLY IN ANGER.
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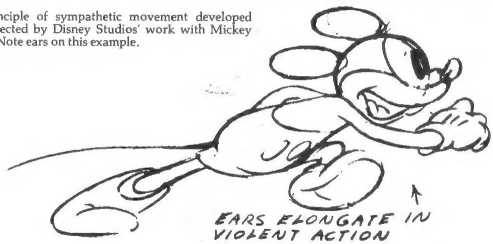
The principle of sympathetic movement developed and perfected by Disney Studios' work with Mickey Mouse. Note ears on this example.



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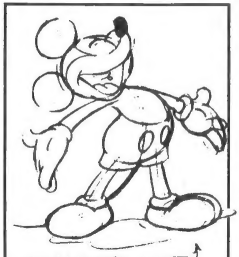
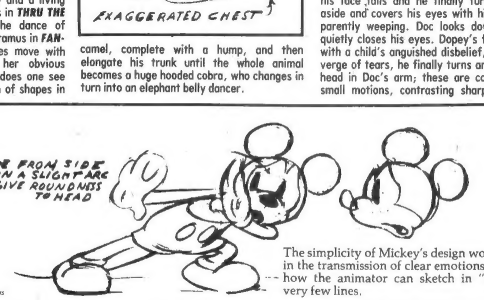
then appears to move through the skeleton's gaping mouth into its rib cage and out past its pelvis. Then there is Bill Roberts' demoniacal cat, its clawed finger pointing directly forward in accusation, rushing from a full shot into an extreme facial close-up to a jolting effect in the nightmarish ***PLUTO'S JUDGMENT DAY*** (1935). There is the water from Mickey's hose seemingly splashing onto the camera and then flowing off it in John McManus' sequence from ***MICKEY'S FIRE BRIGADE*** (1935). How often today does one see an entertaining dance in an animated cartoon? Certainly there is nothing to match those dealt with in the exhibit, not even the relatively simple ones like Dick Lundy's to the music of "Who's Afraid of the Big Bad Wolf?" in ***THREE LITTLE PIGS*** (1933) or Ward Kimball's for his "trucking" crow in ***DUMBO*** (1941). More impressive still are Lundy's showpiece dances on view in animation drawings and videotape; the parody Apache dance between spider and fly in ***WOODLAND CAFE*** (1937) and the series of dances for the shrunken Mickey and a living match, gloves, and playing cards in ***THRU THE MIRROR***. Then too there is the dance of Preston Blair's ballerina hippopotamus in ***FANTASIA***, whom he somehow makes move with astonishing lightness despite her obvious enormous bulk. And how often does one see anything like the transformation of shapes in the displayed sequence on drawings by Howard Swift from ***DUMBO***'s surreal "Pink Elephants on Parade" episode? The drawings begin with an elephant drawn to resemble a



camel, complete with a hump, and then elongate his trunk until the whole animal becomes a huge hooded cobra, who changes in turn into an elephant belly dancer.

The inescapable conclusion to be drawn from all these sequences in the exhibit is that during these years the Disney animation studio, more than any of its contemporaries, constructed its films around primarily visual considerations. Which situations would provide the best visual opportunities? Some cartoons, like ***WOODLAND CAFE*** and ***THRU THE MIRROR***, have no real story but derive their appeal from being series of superb animation sequences which can be enjoyed for their own sake. More often the visual element and story-line are equally strong in the Disney cartoons of this period.

Just as one could study characterization in the single drawings at the Cooper-Hewitt, at the Whitney one could see how it is expressed through a series of drawings, as with the rat. Take Frank Thomas' drawings from the scene in which the Seven Dwarfs are gathered about the bed of the "deceased" Snow White. Grumpy, obviously a man far more used to anger than to sadness, seems dazed by shock; his face falls and he finally turns his head aside and covers his eyes with his hand, apparently weeping. Doc looks downward and quietly closes his eyes. Dopey's face is filled with a child's anguished disbelief, and on the verge of tears, he finally turns and buries his head in Doc's arm; these are comparatively small motions, contrasting sharply with his



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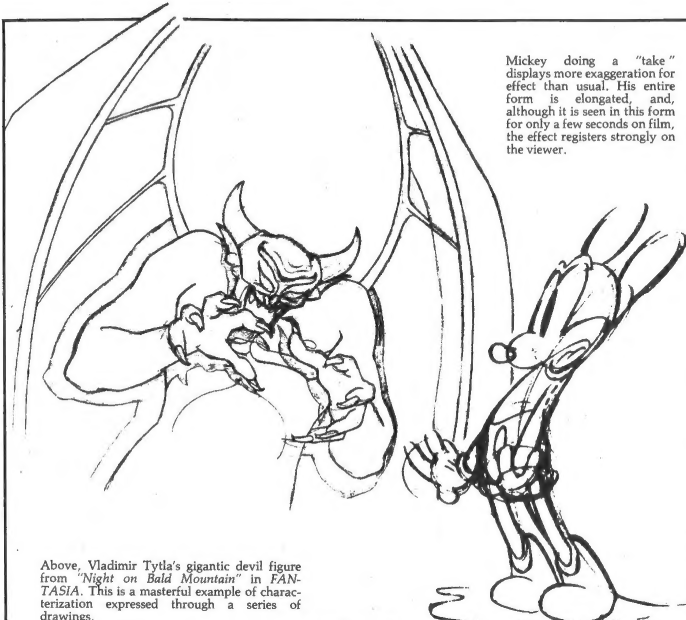
The simplicity of Mickey's design works well in the transmission of clear emotions. Notice how the animator can sketch in "fear" in very few lines.



Mickey doing a "take" displays more exaggeration for effect than usual. His entire form is elongated, and, although it is seen in this form for only a few seconds on film, the effect registers strongly on the viewer.

Above, Vladimir Tytla's gigantic devil figure from *"Night on Bald Mountain"* in *FANTASIA*. This is a masterful example of characterization expressed through a series of drawings.

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characteristic larger ones in the rest of the film. There is Vladimir Tytla's gigantic devil from ***FANTASIA***, reaching down with evil glee to seize his victims, then displaying utter panic at the first burst of the oncoming light; he scowls and reaches down again, but the light returns. He draws himself back from it, raising his arm to shield his eyes, his face and body expressing pain, fear, and, finally, utter helplessness. There is the haughtiness and controlled fury to be observed in Art Babbitt's drawings of ***SNOW WHITE***'s wicked queen, the girlish delight and innocent flirtatiousness in Ollie Johnston's depiction of the anthropomorphic outmobile heroine of ***SUSIE, THE LITTLE BLUE COUPE*** (1952), and the happiness, shock, irritated suspicion and anger that pass across the face of Norm Fergunson's Pluto in a sequence in which he discovers he has sat on a sheet of flypaper in ***PLAYFUL PLUTO*** (1934). Compare the innocent joy, bewilderment, annoyance, and wistful sadness captured in Eric Larson's drawings of ***PINOCCHIO***'s charming kitten Figaro with his drawings of the sleazily sultry dog Peg walking by, at one point, her eyes shut and a front paw raised, apparently caressing her ear with her tongue.

I have only been able to mention a small fraction of the works displayed at the two exhibitions. But I hope that the examples I have selected have made it clear how much the best of animation art has to show anyone interested in studying or practicing cartooning in any form about creating impressions of fluid, dramatic movement in drawings and about vividly visualizing characterization through them.

It might come as a surprise that two museums dedicated to presenting "fine art" would mount exhibitions of animation art. Yet simultaneously, the Whitney was displaying a retrospective of the work of the late Abstract Expressionist Philip Guston, who in his later years created what are in effect cartoons. For example, his ***WINDOW*** (1970) is a drawing of a man covered almost entirely by a sheet full of patches, with two cartoony slits for eyes, wearing Mutt-and-Jeff-style gloves complete with the three lines on the back, and smoking a cartoony cigar that could easily be found in the collection of Walt Kelly's Albert the Alligator. The drawing is reminiscent of Iwerks, Gottfredson, Fleischer and Crumb. Meanwhile, in the lobby one finds the first major work of the artist Alexander Calder: a toy circus consisting of caricatured circus performers and animals made of wood, cork, cloth, metal, and wire. These are three-dimensional cartoons, in effect, and many have moving parts, like animated cartoon figures. It would seem that cartoons might have more of a place in a "fine art" museum than one might first think.

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